



**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

**LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE – WHAT EAST AFRICAN EXPERTS LEARNED  
FROM FIGHTING THE EBOLA EPIDEMIC IN WEST AFRICA**

**A regional conference with international participation**

**6-8 November 2017**

**Nairobi, Kenya**

**BACKGROUND PAPER**

**EAC SECRETARIAT  
P.O. BOX 1096  
ARUSHA, TANZANIA**




**November, 2017**

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The EAC region is home to numerous biologic agents that occur naturally in the environment. For instance, outbreaks of yellow fever have been reported in the recent past and cholera is widespread in the region. The outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza, in Uganda in February January 2017 demonstrated how vulnerable the region also is to this disease, as the region is located in the migratory pathway of birds and shares borders with high-risk countries. Under adverse conditions, these and other agents put human and animal health at risk. In order to prevent diseases that can jeopardise public health, economic stability and the lives and livelihoods of the people in the EAC region, Partner States need to be prepared, including state of the art epidemiologic surveillance, detection and diagnosis capabilities. High levels of risk awareness among relevant stakeholders and continuous horizontal and vertical cooperation and information exchange between them and between the countries accompanied by sound, culturally adapted risk and crisis communication are important to meet this objective.

The ‘Support to Pandemic Preparedness’ project started in March 2017 as part of the German ‘Special Programme Health in Africa’ which the German Government initiated in the advent of the Ebola epidemic to strengthen health systems and to enhance preparedness. The cooperation project is financed by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It operates at the regional level and supports the EAC Secretariat with the objective of improving its coordinating and advisory role for the Partner States in pandemic preparedness. The project pursues a participatory approach and involves key actors from EAC partner countries in three fields of activity:

-  institutionalising the One Health approach and operationalising the regional pandemic preparedness plan;
-  developing a regional risk and crisis communication strategy that reflects the One Health approach and implementing it in practice and
-  offering capacity development.

### 1.2 The West African Ebola virus epidemic (2013–2016): Impact and Response

Nearly 30,000 people were infected and more than 11,000 died during the Ebola epidemic in West Africa in 2014/2016, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The people as well as the health systems and economies in the affected countries still suffer from the impact. Although no cases were registered in East Africa during this Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak, EAC Partner States and neighbouring countries have experienced outbreaks of the virus with fatal human cases. In fact, one of the first recorded outbreaks of EVD occurred in a place in the current South Sudan and the latest outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo in May 2017 took place near the Central African Republic and South Sudan borders. This clearly shows the importance of pandemic preparedness, early warning mechanisms and the need of a pool of rapidly deployable experts from various professions in the region to prevent similarly devastating outbreaks like the one in West Africa.

During the EVD outbreak in West Africa, some 500 East African Professionals from various disciplines assisted their West African brothers and sisters actively in fighting the epidemic, following an initiative by the EAC Partner States through the 10<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health, held in October 2014. Their invaluable experience has not yet been systematically documented. However, lessons learned from such an experience would present a unique treasure of knowledge for preventing, combating and mitigating future outbreaks of infectious diseases of public health concern in the region and beyond. This is especially important as the risk of human exposure to pathogens from animals is growing, not least because high population density leads to ever closer contact between humans and animals, and because of increased cross-border trade, travel, globalization and climate change.

## **2.0 Convening of the Meeting**

Against this backdrop, the EAC Secretariat in collaboration with the Federal Government of Germany through the GIZ coordinated 'Support to Pandemic Preparedness in the EAC Region' project and in cooperation with GIZ's Epidemic Preparedness Team (Schnell einsetzbare Expertengruppe Gesundheit, SEEG) and the German Development Bank (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, KfW) supported 'EAC Regional Network of Reference Laboratories for Communicable Diseases', will host a

### **Regional conference with international participation on**





### **'Lessons for the Future – What East African Experts learned from fighting the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa'**

**in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya**

**6-8 November 2017**

## **3.0 Objectives of the conference**

The conference will bring together a variety of specialists with practical on-site experience in fighting infectious diseases, from medical and veterinary professionals, laboratory experts and nurses to administrative and logistic personnel that were involved in combating EVD and fighting against time. The specific objectives of the conference are to:

-  Create a common understanding among the participants of the conference of pandemic preparedness and recognise the importance of networking and culturally adapted and efficient risk communication;
-  Offer a platform for sharing and discussing the experiences and knowledge which deployed experts gathered and learn from their successes and challenges;
-  facilitate the development of best practices and lessons learned that will serve as valuable tools to prevent or contain the spread of infectious diseases beyond EVD in the future;
-  strengthen south to south collaboration in pandemic preparedness between EAC and ECOWAS, SADC, CEMAC and the East Central and Southern Africa Health Community;

- ✚ offer an opportunity to strengthen the network of infectious diseases specialists in the region and to agree on the establishment of early warning mechanisms;
- ✚ taking first steps towards an urgently needed database of experts that can be rapidly deployed in response to epidemic and pandemic threats in the region and beyond.

#### 4.0 Expected results

- ✚ Participants of the conference have a common understanding of pandemic preparedness and recognise the importance of networking and culturally adapted and efficient risk communication ;
- ✚ Deployed experts shared and discussed their experiences and knowledge from fighting EVD;
- ✚ Lessons learned are available and utilized to enhancing pandemic preparedness in the region in line with the EAC One Health Contingency Plan;;
- ✚ Participants are using best practices and lessons learned as tools for national actions; they recognise the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation;
- ✚ Their awareness about the risks and consequences of inadequate combat measures has increased;
- ✚ South to south collaboration in pandemic preparedness between EAC and ECOWAS, SADC, CEMAC and the East Central and Southern Africa Health Community is strengthened;
- ✚ Participants have agreed on the establishment of early warning mechanisms; First steps towards the establishment of a database of rapidly deployable experts from various professions in the region are taken.

**The outputs of the Conference will be documented and made available in different formats and for different target groups.**

#### 5.0 Conference Format

The conference will be organised around the theme ‘Lessons for the Future – What East African Experts learned from fighting the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa’. The format will comprise plenary sessions, facilitated breakout sessions that allow for in-depth discussions and deeper and more technical analyses and dialogues as well as interactive sessions that stimulate creative approaches for the generation of ideas and solutions.

#### 6.0 Conference Language

Conference Language will be English with simultaneous translation into French.

#### 7.0 Participants

The conference is planned for up to 100 participants. Beyond East African experts who assisted in combating EVD in West Africa, experts from the ECOWAS, SADC and CEMAC regions with personal hands-on-experience will be invited. These experts should have served during the Ebola epidemic in West Africa for a minimum of four weeks. They should

represent all six East African Community States, come from different professional backgrounds, be outspoken and have a critical approach. Details of the desired capacities of the deployed experts are attached in 'Terms of Reference for the Selection of Experts' as **Annex I**. Invitations will also be extended to East African health-related networks and regional and international governmental and non-governmental institutions and organisations.

## **8.0 Conference Venue**

Tbd, Nairobi, Republic of Kenya

## **9.0 Draft Programme of the Meeting**

The draft programme of the conference is attached as **Annex II**.

## Annex I: Terms of Reference for the Selection of Experts



# Lessons for the Future – What East African Experts learned from fighting the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa

## Terms of Reference for the Selection of Experts

### 1 Background information

During the Ebola epidemic in 2014/2016 some 500 East African Professionals from various disciplines assisted their West African brothers and sisters actively in fighting the disease, following an initiative by the EAC Partner States through the 10<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health, held in October 2014. Their invaluable experience has not yet been collected and documented. However, it represents a unique treasure of knowledge for preventing, combating and mitigating future outbreaks of infectious diseases of public health concern.

Against this backdrop, the EAC Secretariat in collaboration with the Federal Government of Germany through the GIZ coordinated 'Support to Pandemic Preparedness in the EAC Region' project and in cooperation with GIZ's Epidemic Preparedness Team (Schnell einsetzbare Expertengruppe Gesundheit, SEEG) and the German Development Bank (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, KfW) supported 'EAC Regional Network of Reference Laboratories for Communicable Diseases', will invite up to 50 of these 500 experts to participate in a regional conference with international participation in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya, from 6 to 8 November 2017 to share their experiences and assist in developing Lessons Learned.

### 2 Objective

The conference aims at exchanging experiences between and developing Lessons Learned from the deployment of East African experts to West Africa with the objective of being better prepared for future outbreaks of infectious diseases of public health concern.

### 3 Scope of Assignment

- ✚ Participation in the conference in Nairobi from 6 to 8 November 2017;
- ✚ Presentation of a personal review in the plenum;
- ✚ Sharing and discussing experiences, best practices and challenges;

- ✚ Participating in developing Lessons Learned in working groups during the conference;
- ✚ Availability for a critical review of a draft Lessons Learned version;

#### **4 Deliverables**

- ✚ Active participation in the conference;
- ✚ Contribution of personal review;
- ✚ Critical review of experiences, best practices and challenges during the deployment;
- ✚ Active contribution to Lessons Learned

#### **5 Duration**

6 to 8 November 2017

#### **6 Place of Assignment**

Nairobi, Republic of Kenya

#### **7 Payment**

For these experts flight tickets (economy class) to Nairobi will be provided (if applicable) and accommodation and meals paid by GIZ according to the company's regulations.

#### **8 Qualification/Competencies required**

Suitable experts should

- ✚ Have been deployed by their governments, sent by non-governmental institutions or have volunteered for assisting in the fight against the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in West Africa;
- ✚ have served in West Africa during the Ebola epidemic for a period of at least 4 weeks;
- ✚ represent all six East African States;
- ✚ represent different professional backgrounds comprising medical professions including nurses, laboratory personnel, administrative personnel, logistics personnel, communication/awareness raising;
- ✚ are outspoken and have a critical approach;
- ✚ are able to communicate in English or French;
- ✚ are willing to contribute actively and target oriented to the conference;
- ✚ are willing to contribute actively to the development of Lessons Learned;
- ✚ are willing to review draft Lessons Learned in a set time frame;
- ✚ are willing to make their CVs available for a database of rapidly deployable experts

Arusha, 4 August 2017

## Annex II: Draft Agenda of the Conference (as of 2 August 2017)



# Lessons for the Future – What East African Experts learned from fighting the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa

## A regional conference with international participation

During the Ebola epidemic some 500 East African Professionals from various disciplines assisted their West African brothers and sisters actively in fighting the epidemic, following an initiative by the EAC Partner States through the 10<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health, held in October 2014. Their invaluable experience has not yet been collected and documented. However, it represents a unique treasure of knowledge for preventing, combating and mitigating future outbreaks of infectious diseases of public health concern.






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**Where** Nairobi, Republic of Kenya

Venue tbd

**When** 6-8 November 2017

**Who** up to 100 participants from (the)

-  East African Community region
-  ECOWAS region
-  SADC region
-  CEMAC region
-  national, regional and international governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations



## **Day 1**

- 1.0 Opening Ceremony
- 2.0 Opening Speech 'Why East African experts assisted in the fight against the Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa'
- 3.0 Personal reviews by formerly deployed experts from different professional backgrounds
- 4.0 Discussion in the plenum
- 5.0 Outlook Day 2 – preparation for 4 working groups

## **Day 2**

- 6.0 Review Day 1
- 7.0 Sharing experiences & best practices (facilitated round 1 of 2)
- 8.0 Harvest results of round 1
- 9.0 Networking activity
- 10.0 Sharing experiences & best practices (facilitated round 2 of 2)
- 11.0 Harvest results of round 2
- 12.0 Collect first ideas for Lessons Learned topics

## **Day 3**

- 13.0 Review Day 2 & networking activities
- 14.0 Developing Lessons Learned in 4 working groups (facilitated round 1 of 2)
- 15.0 Presenting back & discussions
- 16.0 Developing Lessons Learned in 4 working groups (facilitated round 2 of 2)
- 17.0 Presenting back & discussions
- 18.0 Press briefing with selected participants**
- 19.0 Raising awareness & communication – a game in 3 groups
- 20.0 Discussing results in the Plenum
- 21.0 The way forward – First steps towards a database for rapidly deployable experts in the region and beyond
- 22.0 Wrapping up – reflecting what has been achieved
  
- 23.0 Official Closure of the conference