



East African Health Platform



East African Business Council

COMMUNIQUE ON EBOLA IN EAST AFRICA

PREAMBLE

Aware that Chapter 21, Article 118 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community (EAC) calls for joint collaboration on all health matters within the Partner States;

Recognizing that article 118 (a) specifically binds the Partner States on joint action towards the prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases and to control pandemics and epidemics of communicable and to co-operate in facilitating mass immunization and other public health community Campaigns;

Noting that as part of the overall five years EAC Development Strategy (2012-2016), the strategy focuses on the key priority area on strengthening regional health institutions and systems to support prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases in East Africa;

Further recall that the above five years strategy main intervention focus is the development of a regional health services framework with emphasis on cross-border areas and establishment of a regional health information exchange system for communicable and non-communicable diseases in East Africa.

Recalling that the East Africa region has had previous cases of Ebola totaling to about Six Hundred and Six cases (606) combined in 2000, 2007 and 2012 respectively¹ and one death from Marburg in 2014. We note with concern the highly contagious nature of Ebola virus with its potential negative effects on business, education, tourism, travelling and social activities in the region;

¹ Source: WHO Fact Sheet on Ebola 2014 accessed on 27th at 10:30 am. Available at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs103/en/>

APPRECIATIONS

We the undersigned Private Sector, Civil Society, Faith Based Organizations and Other Interest Groups working in the health sector in East Africa appreciates the EAC Partner States for having taken up initiatives to alert their citizens on Ebola and its potential threat and effect to the region, creation of awareness on the prevention, screening for suspects at the airport and other public places among others;

We congratulate the EAC Secretariat for convening several meetings to discuss a regional response towards Ebola;

We express with appreciation the solidarity of many organizations and EAC countries, non-governmental organizations and Civil Society Organizations as well as the active mobilization of EAC support for the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa and appeal that the same assistance be mobilized in favor of other countries affected in other regions;

Specifically, we commend the EAC Partner States for demonstrating solidarity with the West African Countries by agreeing to send about six Hundred (600) Health Workers to provide support in containing the Ebola outbreak in the West African region and call upon them to fast track the implementation of this decision;

We further appreciate the EAC Partner States for dedicating a team of experts from their respective countries to meet in a couple of week to develop a comprehensive regional plan to respond to Ebola and other communicable diseases in East Africa;

We also thank the EAC Partner States Ministry of Health, Trade and Immigration for their efforts in harmonizing and partnering towards a joint prevention response on Ebola in the region;

Finally, we applaud the Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA) for developing a regional response for upgrading and improving health safety measures for passengers travelling in East Africa.

CONCERN

We the undersigned Private Sector, Civil Society, Faith Based Organization and Other Interest Groups working in the health sector in East Africa are still concerned about the following in response to the prevention of Ebola in the region;

We are very concerned that to date there are still limited checking and screening of passengers and goods entering East Africa at the border points with no emergency isolation health centers

at the borders and yet these are high risk points for passengers crossing to the region from different countries;

We note with concern that to date there is no standard comprehensive regional early warning mechanism and plan for communicable disease especially to response to the current Ebola potential threat to the region;

We are also concerned that there is low sensitization, information and communication to the public on the prevention measures on Ebola in East Africa, particularly to the rural and hard to reach population;

RECOMMENDATIONS

We the undersigned therefore, recommend to the EAC Secretariat, Partner Stakeholders and relevant stakeholders in the region to implement the following as a prevention response on Ebola in East Africa;

A. East African Community Secretariat and Partner States

We urge the East African Community Secretariat and Partner States to develop a comprehensive regional early warning mechanism and plan for communicable disease in East Africa especially with a focus on Ebola;

We call upon the EAC Partner States to establish a Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought, Famine and Public Health in East Africa to provide support to Partner States and EAC Secretariat and elaborate specific criteria for the Fund operations; and calls on the EAC Partner States to make voluntary contributions to the Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought, Famine and Public Health in East Africa;

We appeal to the East African Partner States Ministries of Health and Transport and the Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA) to establish check points and an emergency isolation health centres at the airport, cross border places and highly crowded public places to contain confirmed and suspected cases of Ebola and also calls upon the airlines to provide "Ebola Surveillance Forms" in-flight, to help reduce on confusion and crowding upon landing, and all the misery this may cause to innocent travelers;

We call upon the East African Community Partner States to scale up on the sensitization and awareness creation to the public on the prevention, management and support to the affected citizens in their respective countries;

We further call upon the East African Community Partner States to employ qualified health workers with quality and effective screening equipments at the airport, borders and highly crowded public places to check and monitor Ebola;

We urge the EAC Partner States to strengthen and fast track current research for serums and vaccines on communicable diseases especially those with no confirmed licensed drugs with a priority to be placed on Ebola and Marburg among others.

B. Private Sector, Civil Society and other health stakeholders;

The private sector and the civil society organizations make efforts to improve health in the region more impactful. With the current context of emerging threat of Ebola from West Africa, Civil Society, Private Sector and other interest groups working on health in East Africa can mobilize community and their own constituents in the hard to reach areas and create awareness on the risk factors on Ebola as a prevention response in the region.

C. Health Workers

We call upon the health-care workers to always take standard precautions when caring for patients, regardless of their presumed diagnosis. These include basic hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, use of personal protective equipment (to block splashes or other contact with infected materials), safe injection practices and safe burial practices;

We also urge the health-care workers caring for patients with suspected or confirmed Ebola virus to apply extra infection control measures to prevent contact with the patient's blood and body fluids and contaminated surfaces or materials such as clothing and bedding; and appeal that when in close contact (within 1 metre) of patients with EBV, health-care workers should wear face protection (a face shield or a medical mask and goggles), a clean, non-sterile long-sleeved gown, and gloves (sterile gloves for some procedures);

We appeal to the trained laboratory workers working on samples taken from humans and animals for investigation of Ebola infection to be handled and processed in suitably equipped laboratories.

D. Community and Citizens of East Africa

Community and citizen's engagement is key to successful controlling of Ebola outbreaks as follows;

We call upon the community to raise awareness of risk factors for Ebola infection and protective measures that individuals can take is an effective way to reduce human transmission; These Risk reduction messaging should focus on several factors namely:

- **Reducing the risk of wildlife-to-human transmission** from contact with infected fruit bats or monkeys/apes and the consumption of their raw meat. Animals should be handled with gloves and other appropriate protective clothing. Animal products (blood and meat) should be thoroughly cooked before consumption;
- **Reducing the risk of human-to-human transmission** from direct or close contact with people with Ebola symptoms, particularly with their bodily fluids. Gloves and appropriate personal protective equipment should be worn when taking care of ill patients at home. Regular hand washing is required after visiting patients in hospital, as well as after taking care of patients at home;
- **Outbreak containment measures** including prompt and safe burial of the dead, identifying people who may have been in contact with someone infected with Ebola, monitoring the health of contacts for 21 days, the importance of separating the healthy from the sick to prevent further spread, the importance of good hygiene and maintaining a clean environment.

ORGANIZATION ENDORSEMENTS

	<p>The East African Business Council (EABC) is the apex body of business associations of the Private Sector and Corporates from the 5 East African Countries</p>
	<p>The East African Health Platform (EAHP) was founded in October 2012 as an advocacy Platform for Private Health Sector Organizations (PSOs), Civil Society Health Organizations (CSOs), Faith Based Health Organizations (FBOs) and other Interest Groups to advance health outcomes in East Africa.</p>
	<p>The East Africa Healthcare Federation (EAHF) is an association of private sector health organizations that was formed in 2012 when the Kenya Healthcare Federation (KHF), Uganda Healthcare Federation (UHF), the Association of Private Health Facilities in Tanzania (APHFTA) and the Rwanda private health sector joined to form an overarching umbrella body for the East African region.</p>

	<p>EAST AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS' FORUM is an Umbrella Organization composed of 60 Members for Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania</p>
	<p>EASTERN AFRICA NATIONAL NETWORKS OF AIDS SERVICE ORGANISATIONS (EANNASO) is a regional network for AIDS Services and health promotion organizations.</p>
	<p>Kenya Healthcare Federation (KHF) is the health sector representative for the Kenya Private Sector Alliance. It works with care providers, hospitals, pharmaceutical manufacturers and insurers to promote strategic public-private partnerships toward achieving national access to quality healthcare.</p>
	<p>The Church of Uganda is a Jesus-loving, Bible-believing, Spirit-filled Anglican Church engaged in the mission of Jesus Christ in today's world.</p>
	<p>Institute for the Development of Civil Society (IDCS)</p>
	<p>Advocacy Coalition for Sustainable Agriculture (ACSA). A network of 18 Organizations that promote Sustainable Agriculture in Uganda.</p>
	<p>Kenya Pharmaceuticals distributors Association (K.P.D.A)</p>
	<p>Malaria and Childhood Illness NGO Network Secretariat (MACIS); an umbrella organization that brings together 346 civil society organizations involved in malaria, maternal and child health programming in Uganda</p>
	<p>SFR is a local non-governmental organization, which is non-religious, non-political and non-profit making. SFR's organizational vision is "sustainable social welfare, integration and development for vulnerable groups"</p>

	<p>The Federation of East African Pharmaceutical Manufacturers (FEAPM) is the apex association of pharmaceutical manufacturers within the East African Community and one of the founding members of the Federation of African Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Associations (FAPMA).</p>
	<p>Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development</p>
	<p>Uganda National NGO Forum (UNNGOF)</p>
	<p>Environ-Climato Concern Tanzania</p>
	<p>Real Agency for Community Development (RACD) Membership of 14 group Members for Uganda</p>
	<p>Poor Women's Development Network</p>