

ECOWAS Member States Poised to Boost Local Quality Medicines Production.

A two-day multi-stakeholder consultation meeting opened here today at the Splendid Hotel to validate and adopt the ECOWAS Regional Pharmaceutical Plan (ERPP).

OUAGADOUGOU, OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO, April 29, 2014 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A two-day multi-stakeholder consultation meeting opened here today at the Splendid Hotel to validate and adopt the [ECOWAS Regional Pharmaceutical Plan](#) (ERPP).



“Mortgaging our collective regional needs to external stakeholders is fraught with dangers”

Dr. Carlos Brito

Convened by the West African Health Organisation (WAHO), the meeting has brought together more than fifty-five participants drawn from the ECOWAS Member States, ECOWAS Commission, the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Associations (IFPMA, WAPMA, PMGMAN), Civil Society

(ITPC-WA and RAME), US Pharmacopeia/CePAT, United Nations Agencies (UNAIDS, WHO, UNDP, UNIDO), AU/NEPAD, Development Banks (AfDB, EBID), UEMOA, as well as major pharmaceutical companies in West Africa.

The Essential Medicines and Vaccines Programme Officer at WAHO, Mrs Sybil Ossei-Agyeman Yeboah, explained that the ERPP is a follow-up of the November 2013 consultation on the ECOWAS Charter on Public-Private partnership for local pharmaceutical production held in Bobo-Dioulasso. The ECOWAS Charter is an off-shoot of the 14th Ordinary Assembly of ECOWAS Health Ministers held in Praia. The Plan provides a framework for strengthening the pharmaceutical manufacturing industry in West Africa and develops a conducive environment with a view to making quality, safe and affordable medicines accessible to the region's population.

In his opening remarks, UNAIDS Representative, Dr. Joy Backory told participants that the ERPP is coming at a very opportune time when countries in West Africa have committed to universal health and ARV coverage, and have started planning for the ending of AIDS.

Reminding partners of the already established ECOWAS ARV buffer stock mechanism hosted by Cote d'Ivoire as a major dividend of such efforts, Dr. Backory said the journey to breaking over-reliance on externally-supplied medicines remains on course. “As countries prepare to ending AIDS, getting quality essential medicines including ARVs at affordable prices to those who need them, most especially in West Africa, will be critical - this will depend on a vibrant and people centred pharmaceutical industry”

The Acting Director of WAHO, Department for Disease and Epidemic Control, Dr. Carlos Brito, representing the Director General of the organisation, Dr. Xavier Crespin, drew participants' attention to the fact that between 60 and 90 percent of needed essential medicines come from outside the ECOWAS region thus making its population largely consumers of imported health commodities. “Mortgaging our collective regional needs in essential and life saving medicines to external stakeholders is fraught with dangers. The reasonable path is strengthening the local manufacturing of

medicines through innovative investments,” he cautioned.

The ECOWAS Commissioner for Industry and Private Sector Promotion, Mr. Kalilou Traore, in his message delivered by the Commission’s Head of Industry Division, Mr. Kemjika Ajoku thanked development partners for their commitment and commended WAHO for driving forward the process of developing the regional pharmaceutical plan.

He urged partners and national Governments to balance the idea of promoting local manufacture of medicines with the creation of an enabling environment that will favour this production at costs that are competitive with imported ones. “ We must forge alliances and strategic partnerships with developing nations that have made tremendous progress in developing their local pharmaceutical industries,” he concluded.

In his own remarks, the Nigerian Ambassador in Burkina Faso His Excellency, Mr. David G.Bala said that while we recognize that meeting ECOWAS region’s demand for formulations and bulk medicines can be a daunting challenge, we should not lose sight of enormous opportunities, which if tapped, will reverse the trend of poor access to life saving medicines.

When adopted, the ERPP will provide a comprehensive framework for WAHO and partners to progress in a coherent and efficient manner, in dealing with medicines accessibility issues. A launch of the plan is envisaged in not too distant a future, jointly with UNAIDS and other partners.

In the recent past, WAHO’s Essential Medicines and Vaccines Programme has provided direct technical and financial support to pharmaceutical manufacturing companies in Nigeria, Ghana and Cape Verde to upgrade their facilities and build personnel capacity.

Kayode Egbeleye
West African Health Organisation
+226-66236648
email us here

This press release can be viewed online at: <http://www.einpresswire.com>

Disclaimer: If you have any questions regarding information in this press release please contact the company listed in the press release. Please do not contact EIN Presswire. We will be unable to assist you with your inquiry. EIN Presswire disclaims any content contained in these releases.

© 1995-2016 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.