



MEDIA STATEMENT

SADC Ministers of Health and Ministers responsible for HIV and AIDS meet in the United Republic of Tanzania

The Joint Meeting of Ministers of Health and Ministers responsible for HIV and AIDS from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was held on 7th November, 2019 in Dar Es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania.

The meeting was attended by 14 SADC Member States namely; Angola, Botswana, Union of Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Also in attendance was the Regional Director of the World Health Organisation for African Regional Office, Dr. Matshidiso Rebecca Moeti, representatives of International Cooperating Partners, United Nations agencies, Medical Regulatory Bodies, International Organisations, Civil Society Organisations and media.

The meeting discussed a wide range of issues under the theme: *SADC Cooperation is a major pillar to sustainable health development and the fight against HIV and AIDS.*

The meeting was officially opened by Her Excellency Samia Suluhu Hassan, Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania. In her remarks, Her Excellency Samia Hassan called on SADC Member States to forge a common front to addressing health challenges affecting the region. Her Excellency Samia Hassan reiterated the need for universal health coverage to ensure that health services are affordable and accessible to all citizens, in line with the global Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage adopted by SADC Heads of State and Government at the recent UN High-Level meeting on Universal Health Coverage held on 23 September 2019.

In her remarks, Her Excellency Dr. Stergomena Lawrence Tax, Executive Secretary of SADC commended SADC Member States for the steady progress the region has made in reducing HIV and AIDS, Malaria and TB cases and called for sustained efforts to consolidate the gains the region has recorded so far.

H.E. Dr Tax applauded SADC Heads of State and Governments for adopting the global Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage during the recent UN High-Level meeting on Universal Health Coverage held on 23 September 2019, on the margins of the UN General Assembly.

Hon. Umy Mwalimu, Minister of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Chairperson of the Committee of SADC Ministers of Health and Ministers Responsible for HIV and AIDS expressed the commitment of the Ministers to cooperate in the fight against cross border diseases.

The Regional Director of the World Health Organisation African Region, Dr Matshidiso Moeti urged SADC Member States to share information, expertise and resources, and to improve coordination of interventions through cross-border collaboration to prevent transmission of diseases such as yellow fever, cholera and Ebola

During the meeting the Ministers considered the following issues;

- The Ministers approved the SADC Accountability Scorecard for nutrition as a tool to measure progress on nutrition in the region and urged Member States to use it in monitoring and reporting progress.
- The Ministers noted the significant successes in addressing major diseases of public health concern which has led to a decline in the incidence and mortality and morbidity from diseases such as AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis.
- In the spirit of leaving no one behind, the Ministers committed to the acceleration of Universal Health Coverage in the SADC region as a way of achieving United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, not only related to health and well-being, but ending poverty in all its forms.
- The Ministers urged Member States to continue to implement the *“Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Tuberculosis”* which reaffirmed commitment to end the tuberculosis epidemic globally by 2030 by scaling up of TB care and prevention services. In the same vein, the Ministers urged Member States to implement the Continental Accountability Framework for Action to End Tuberculosis and to increase domestic funding initiatives for TB.
- The Ministers noted the progress made in the operationalization of the SADC Pooled Procurement Services (SPSS) and urged Member States to encourage their procuring entities to utilise the SADC pooled procurement services for procuring health commodities.
- On HIV and AIDS, Ministers called for intensified efforts in HIV prevention and social mobilization, access to treatment and support, impact mitigation of HIV and AIDS, resource mobilization, and strengthening institutional monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- On Ebola, the Ministers committed to scale up Health Emergency Preparedness and response to outbreaks such as Ebola and measles
- The Ministers noted progress made on addressing overweight and obesity in the region urged Member States to facilitate implementation of key priority interventions proposed in the WHO strategic plan to reduce the double burden of malnutrition in the African region.

Other engagements by the Ministers of Health, HIV and AIDS

- On the sidelines of their meeting, the Ministers had an opportunity to interact with His Excellency Dr Jakaya Kikwete, Former President of the Republic of Tanzania who is a Member of End Malaria Council which comprises influential public and private sector leaders who aim to ensure malaria eradication remains a top global priority.
- Former President Kikwete urged the Ministers of Health and Ministers of Finance and the highest levels of governments in the SADC region to give financing malaria control the top priority in the national budgets to eliminate Malaria which remains the leading cause of death in Africa.
- The Ministers held a meeting with Global Fund during which the Ministers requested the SADC Secretariat to develop a Concept Note for accessing funds from the Global Fund for regional cross border initiatives.
- On 8th November, 2019, the Ministers took the lead in the commemoration of 2019 SADC Malaria Day at Kibaha, outside the City of Dar es Salaam where they launched a ***Zero Malaria Starts With Me*** campaign and Malaria Accountability Scorecard for the United Republic of Tanzania as part of the commemoration of the SADC Malaria Day.
- The Ministers visited the offices and warehouse of the Medical Stores Department (MSD) of the United Republic of Tanzania which signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the SADC Secretariat for SADC Pooled Procurement of Pharmaceutical Services (SPPS).
- The Ministers also visited the Tanzania Biotech Products Limited, manufacturer of Biolarvicides used for malaria vector control. The Ministers appreciated the importance of integrated malaria vector control interventions which include, use of Larvicides, Insecticide Treated Nets and Indoor Residual Spray.

Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania

08th November, 2019: