



**World Health
Organization**

AFRICAN REGION

African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control (APOC)

Programme africain de Lutte contre l'Onchocercose

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PRESS RELEASE

34 African Universities, Medical, Nursing Schools to Teach CDI Strategy

Nairobi, Kenya/10 November 2010 – Sixteen universities, medical and nursing schools from nine East and Southern African countries have agreed to introduce the Community-Directed Intervention (CDI) strategy in their curricula, as a way of expanding the use of the innovative and cost-effective strategy which encourages community ownership of health care delivery.

The decision taken by vice-chancellors, deans, heads of medical and nursing schools at the just-concluded meeting in Nairobi brings to 34 the number of African universities, medical and nursing teaching institutions that have agreed to teach the CDI strategy. Eighteen (18) similar institutions from twelve (12) countries in Central and Western Africa were the first to initiate the process of adopting the teaching of the CDI approach at a meeting in Abuja, Nigeria in 2009.

The community-directed intervention strategy, a bottom-up initiative to public health care delivery, empowers communities to take care of their own health. It builds local capacity, strengthens weak health systems and has proven to be effective for the delivery of multiple health interventions such as distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets, home management of malaria and vitamin A supplementation.

In one of their recommendations, participants at the Nairobi meeting undertook to motivate local academic health care providers and policy makers to support the inclusion of the CDI strategy in their curricula. They also agreed to build partnerships between universities, health institutions and the Ministries of Health of their respective countries to promote the expansion of the CDI strategy.

Opening the meeting at the Nairobi Laico Regency hotel, Kenya's Minister of Public Health and Sanitation, Beth Mugo called for wider use of community-directed intervention approach for the delivery of public health services which will help to overcome the adverse effects of the global financial crisis. "It is incumbent upon us to look for better ways to provide and deliver cheaper and accessible health care to our populations, and Community-directed intervention (CDI) strategy has been proved effective," the Minister added.

In her closing remarks Dr Joyce Onsongo, Disease Prevention and Control Officer at the World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office, who deputised for the Country Representative, Dr Abdoulie Jack, urged the participants to translate their recommendations into effective training programmes to expand the use of the CDI strategy.

The WHO African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control (WHO/APOC), has been using the CDI strategy for the control of the debilitating and blinding disease commonly known as river blindness for over 13 years with remarkable success and the involvement of more than 1.2 million trained community drug distributors.

The Programme's Director Dr Uche Amazigo told the meeting that the African region would make sustainable improvement in health systems with a long-term plan to train and engage future health professionals on a strategy that works, and is inclusive of community participation.

The meeting was attended by 44 participants, including vice-chancellors, deans, heads of medical and nursing schools from Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. There were guest participants from Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Sudan.



Participants at the WHO/APOC CDI curriculum meeting in Nairobi, Kenya