Mitigating The Impact of Emerging & Re-Emerging Diseases

The Commonwealth

Dr Mbololwa Mbikusita-Lewanika
Health Adviser, Commonwealth Secretariat
53 independent countries working together
to pursue common goals and promote
development, democracy and peace
The Commonwealth Secretariat supports Commonwealth member countries to achieve development, democracy and peace.
Member countries are also supported by a network of more than 80 intergovernmental, civil society, cultural and professional organisations, including those working on Commonwealth health priorities.
- Home to 2.4 billion people
- 60% under 30 years-old
- Includes both advanced economies and developing countries
- Thirty of our members are small states
The Commonwealth Secretariat works in three areas:

- Governance and Peace
- Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources
- Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development - Commonwealth health priorities like emerging/re-emerging diseases addressed through the EYSD Directorate
Emerging/Re-emerging Diseases
Outbreaks: Since the 1970s, about 40 infectious diseases

Diseases have no border
Emerging/Re-emerging Diseases

Emerging diseases likely to cause major epidemics:

- Crimean Congo haemorrhagic fever
- Ebola Virus Disease
- Marburg
- Lassa fever
- MERS
- SARS Coronavirus diseases
- Nipah and Rift Valley Fever

‘…either new, previously unrecognized diseases that are appearing for the first time, or diseases which are known but which are increasing in incidence and/or geographic range’ Source: WHO
Convening of Diverse member countries

- Various circumstances & perspectives but common goals
- Sharing experiences and lessons learnt
Increasing health security and Universal Health Coverage (UHC) challenges:

In view of recent emerging and re-emerging infectious disease outbreaks, such as Ebola, malaria, TB, yellow fever, HIV and AIDS, we acknowledge the threat to health security and affirm the importance of UHC as a key building block. Climate Change disasters are increasing in impact and frequency - whilst environmental health issues continue especially with rapid urbanisation. The recent outbreak of Zika, which has been confirmed in the Americas with the potential to reach new regions, highlights the need to strengthen health systems to ensure resilience (2016 ).
Commonwealth Heads called on the Commonwealth at large to support the strengthening of policies for universal health coverage in order to build strong and resilient health systems that will, in turn, enable better responses to public health threats and emergencies, as well as to address the increasing burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Heads also called for continued promotion of collaborative research into communicable and non-communicable diseases, as well as collective Commonwealth action to advocate for global health security and the reduction of all public health threats, including the global imperative of addressing antimicrobial resistance.
CHMM 2016: Hon. Ummy Ally Mwalimu, Minister of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, United Republic of Tanzania noted that achieving UHC in African countries was hampered by lack of basic capacities:

- Implementation of preventative systems
- Building preparedness
- Ensuring surveillance for detecting diseases
Emerging & Re-emerging Diseases in The Commonwealth - Sierra Leone

- 90% of 2.4 billion people across the Commonwealth live in malaria endemic areas
- 25 Commonwealth countries currently tackling malaria, 20 have eliminated malaria (Sri Lanka in 2015) and 8 have never been endemic
- The African region (19 CW) faces a number of health threats from epidemics, pandemics, and natural and human-made disasters
  - HIV/AIDS, TB, Cholera,
  - Recent Lassa outbreaks:
    - Nigeria: March 1, 2018
    - Liberia: February 22, 2018
    - Nigeria: June 28, 2017
    - Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso: March 10, 2017
Health Security & Challenges for Commonwealth States in the Caribbean

- Zika
- Chikungunya
- Mosquito-borne diseases
Experience from the Caribbean: Zika Virus

- Caribbean catered for 1 billion tourist arrivals in 2013, which was hugely dependent on health security.

- The 2014 Chikungunya outbreak and the Zika outbreak highlighted the vulnerability of the Caribbean to global health threats.

- Many countries were unprepared.

- Health security had to be seen as a collective Caribbean Community (CARICOM) responsibility rather than the individual member state.

- Collaboration among regional public and non-state actors was crucial.

- Collaboration encouraged innovation, and enabled each stakeholder entity to bring capacity and resources in the search for solutions.

- Barbados Adopted An Integrated Management Strategy
  - Social communication; Epidemiological surveillance; Laboratory diagnosis; Environment management; Clinical case management; Integrated Vector Management
Climate Change & Health-Related Challenges for the Commonwealth Pacific

- Fiji devastated by Cyclone Winston
- Death
- Disease outbreak
- Structural damage
Climate Change & Health-Related Challenges for the Commonwealth Pacific

Rising sea levels Contribute to Emerging Diseases
Emerging Diseases: Commonwealth Technical Assistance

- **ECSA-HC**: long-term expert to strengthen training of nurses & midwives in skilled health professionals for MCH

- **ECSA**: HRH training is regional priority; implementing WHO Code, developed from CW Code; full circle

- **CW Code of Practice informed development of WHO Global Code**

- **CW Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Health Workers**
  - Non-legal framework
  - Migratory rights of individuals protected
  - Fair treatment of migrant HRH
Emerging Diseases: Commonwealth Technical Assistance

- **St Lucia**: long-term expert to improve efficiency in delivering human resources for an effective health service.

- **Mauritius**: long-term expert to assist finalisation of the draft Health Profession Council; ‘Allied Health Profession Bill’.

- **Sierra Leone**: long-term Expert placed in MOHS to strengthen disease surveillance & coordination.
Commonwealth Technical Assistance: Enhancing Health Systems in a Post Ebola Environment

- Expert placed in Ministry of Health & Sanitation to help develop outbreak containment strategies.
- Commonwealth initiative to support Sierra Leone’s health protection policy development.
- Commonwealth initiative to strengthen leadership and management capacity within the Ministry and to learn and share approaches with other countries.
The Commonwealth’s Current Focus - Universal Health Coverage & Non-Communicable Diseases

- **CHOGM**: strengthening UHC policies to build strong and resilient health systems - improved response to public health threats and emergencies

- **Secretariat**: facilitating experience-sharing & lessons across the Commonwealth

- **CW Health Ministers** focus on sustainable UHC financing
Universal Health Coverage - Sustainable Financing

- Pan-Commonwealth studies for discussion at 2018 ministerial meeting:
  - UHC funding mechanisms
  - Domestic resource mobilisation/Aid utilisation
  - NCDs impact in the Commonwealth
  - Health facility-based coordinated response to NCDs

- ECSA member states input greatly anticipated - for Pan-CW sharing

- Acceleration of UHC in ECSA critical in order to address health priorities in the region, including emerging & re-emerging diseases
Recapping: Mitigating The Impact of Emerging & Re-Emerging Diseases

The importance of the issue -- Highlighted and acknowledged at the highest level (CHOGM April 2018)

The diverse challenges in the Commonwealth - also opportunity also opportunity for sharing diverse experiences

The Commonwealth family: finding solutions together, supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat and sharing experience & lessons learnt
The Commonwealth and the ECSA region

• ECSA special place in The Commonwealth
• Long history of collaboration
• Long may it continue
• We look forward to ECSA inputs:
  • 2018 CHMM
  • 2018 CHOGM
• ECSA invited to join extended family/the Commonwealth family
Towards a common future

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting London

16th-20th April 2018

The Commonwealth is a diverse community of 53 nations that work together to promote prosperity, democracy and peace.

In April 2018, the UK will host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) when leaders from all the member countries are expected to gather in London and Windsor.

They will come together to reaffirm our common values, address the shared global challenges we face and agree how to work to create a better future for all our citizens, particularly young people.
Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting
Starling Hotel, Geneva, 20 May 2018

Theme: Enhancing the global fight against NCDs; raising awareness, mobilising resources and ensuring accessibility to Universal Health Coverage