

MARCH 2023

# EAST, CENTRAL & SOUTHERN AFRICA HEALTH COMMUNITY



## WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS



## LATEST FROM THE SECRETARIAT

### TOP STORIES



#### **SADC Women in Mining receive capacity building.**

Women in the mining sector in SADC countries have undergone capacity-building training aimed at enhancing their participation in policy dialogues.



#### **Revolutionizing the Fight Against TB and Silicosis: Evaluation Finds Zambia's Centre of Excellence a Game Changer**

The recent evaluation of the Centre of Excellence in Occupational Health and Safety in Zambia indicate that the Centre of Excellence has become a game changer in addressing health issues.



#### **Botswana validates findings from CRG assessment**

Botswana stakeholders convened in a two day meeting to validate findings from the Community Rights and Gender (CRG) assessment report.



## SADC WOMEN IN MINING RECEIVE CAPACITY BUILDING.

The mining sector has the potential to drive economic growth and reduce poverty, but women in the region still face numerous barriers that limit their participation. To address this issue, a situational analysis was conducted and a report and SADC action plan was developed on strengthening the capacity of women in these groups. Between 6th -7th March 2023 ECSA-HC under its TIMS III project organized a two day training workshop for women in mining sector in the SADC region.

The 2-day training workshop aimed to empower women in the mining industry by increasing their capacity to participate and contribute to the sector's growth. The workshop focused on enhancing women's understanding of their rights and responsibilities in the workplace, as well as providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills to participate in policy development processes related to ending TB in the mining industry. It also addressed the health and safety barriers facing women, including TB, and provided an opportunity to improve working conditions. The workshop also served as a platform to build a network of women working in the mining industry who could support each other in overcoming the barriers and advancing their careers. The meeting had representation of women in mining associations from 12 countries namely Eswatini, Botswana, DRC, Malawi, Madagascar Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

*“In Tanzania, women mine gold, gemstone, and diamond yet they face challenges such as limited access to technology and finance. The formation of SADC WIMA serves as a beacon of hope, as it provides opportunities for building of networks and the sharing of knowledge - Shama Diwani- Tanzania”*

The workshop reached its climax with the finalization of the draft Constitution for the SADC Women in Mining Association (SADC WIMA).

The establishment of SADC WIMA will give these women a collective voice and the ability to address issues at a regional level, thereby enhancing their visibility and advocacy efforts. This session was pivotal and historic, as the women in the mining industry in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region had been eagerly awaiting the formalization of a regional entity that would coordinate their efforts and provide them with a formal platform for recognition.



*“With the WIMA constitution in place, our voices are now amplified and our significance in the mining industry acknowledged. ECSA-HC, a true catalyst in this endeavor, deserves a round of applause.- Ms. Nametso Violet- Chairperson SADC WIMA”*



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## REVOLUTIONIZING THE FIGHT AGAINST TB AND SILICOSIS: EVALUATION FINDS ZAMBIA'S CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE A GAME CHANGER"

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The Eastern and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC) and the African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD) recently conducted an evaluation of the Centre of Excellence in Occupational Health and Safety in Zambia. The preliminary findings of the evaluation are a testament to the transformative impact of the Centre of Excellence on the delivery of essential services in the field of occupational health.

One of the most notable changes since the establishment of the Centre of Excellence has been an increase in screening for occupational TB and Silicosis, as well as a greater emphasis on primary preventive measures. The CoE has been enabled and in turn capacitated Zambia to provide the much needed essential and specialized occupational health services, and puts Zambia in a pole position to provide strategic support in occupational health and hygiene to the region. Due to improved capacity of the Occupational Health Institute the number of medical compensations has increased from about 90 in 2018 to at least 130 in 2022.

The Centre of Excellence has brought about a paradigm shift in the way occupational health services are delivered in Zambia, and its impact is already being felt by the workers and communities it serves.

The results of the evaluation are encouraging and highlight the importance of investing in health and safety initiatives that have the potential to improve the lives and well-being of workers. ECSA-HC and AUDA-NEPAD are committed to supporting the continued growth and development of the Centre of Excellence, and to working towards a future where workers in the region have access to safe and healthy working conditions.



**BOTSWANA VALIDATES FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY RIGHTS AND GENDER ASSESSMENT**

Recognizing the need for a deeper understanding of the community, rights, and gender-related barriers in the fight against TB in the mining sector in Southern Africa ECSA-HC commissioned Sthands Consulting to conduct a Communities, Rights and Gender assessment and recommend key actions for six SADC countries, including Botswana, through the TIMS Regional Grant. To this end the Botswana National TB Programme (MOH) and the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC) co-organized a two-day national level workshop to discuss and validate the preliminary findings and recommended key actions of the TIMS CRG Assessment and Operational Planning in Botswana. The purpose of the workshop was to disseminate the Assessment Report, bring attention to its outcomes for ownership, share the data, and prioritize the recommended key actions to inform the development of the national TIMS Community Engagement, Human Rights and Gender Equality (CRG) policies.

The workshop was attended by representatives from ex-miners, stakeholder NGOs such as FHI 360, representatives from line ministries, donors, the for-profit sector, Botswana Chamber of mines, and Women in mining associations. The validation workshop yielded numerous achievements in the fight against TB in the country. Participants left with a wider knowledge of the assessment outcomes, solidifying their understanding of the unique challenges faced by key populations in the mining sector. Additionally, the workshop resulted in a consensus on the accuracy and robustness of the findings and recommendations, providing a strong foundation for future actions. The indications of ownership and the creation of a roadmap for implementation of the key actions demonstrate a clear path forward for addressing the CRG-related barriers in the fight against TB.



The workshop provided a platform for stakeholders to discuss and validate the data, share their inputs, and work towards a common goal of improving access to TB services and addressing human rights and gender equality barriers. The preliminary findings of the TIMS CRG Assessment And Operational Planning in Botswana served as a testament to the importance of addressing these issues in the fight against TB.

## FINALIZATION AND COSTING OF KENYA'S SECOND NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

The Eastern and Southern Africa Health Community (ESCA-HC) is working to address Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) through the Strengthening Pandemic Preparedness Project. The project provides support to five countries, Zambia, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Mozambique, to strengthen their multisectoral responses to AMR by implementing National Action Plans (NAPs) on Antimicrobial Resistance.

In addition to these five countries, ESCA-HC continues to provide technical support to other countries in the region. Kenya is one such country that has been making significant progress in addressing AMR. The Government of Kenya developed and launched the Antimicrobial Resistance Policy and NAP in 2017, and implementation has been ongoing for the past five years.

Recently, the National Antimicrobial Stewardship Interagency Committee (NASIC) secretariat in Kenya initiated a review process of the NAP, which brought together stakeholders from various sectors and levels of government, as well as academia, civil society organizations, and industry. The review process revealed key successes and challenges in the implementation of the NAP, and highlighted the need for updates and improvements in the next cycle.

One of the key successes was the deployment of an integrated National AMR Surveillance System generating data which has been used to define the burden of priority pathogens of concern and inform policies and guidelines. The surveillance sites from both human and animal health have increased from 2 in 2017 to 17 by the end of 2022.

In light of ESCA-HC's expertise in building regional and national capacities on AMR, the Kenyan Ministry of Health invited ESCA-HC to provide technical support in the review and costing of the second NAP on Antimicrobial Resistance. The activity was carried out from February 27th to March 3rd 2023, in Naivasha, Kenya.

The five-day workshop, which included a 2-day costing and budgeting training session, was facilitated by NASIC secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Managing the Medicines Pipeline (MTaPS) program, the World Health Organization (WHO), and ESCA-HC. The preliminary NAP costs revealed that it would require US\$ 67M to implement the plan. The workshop brought together participants from the human health, animal health, aquaculture crops, and environmental sectors from the national and county levels, to ensure that relevant actions and interventions are captured and costed into the National Action Plan, reflecting the One Health approach.



**Group photo: ESCA HC, represented by Dr. Martin Matu and Dr. Evelyn Wesangula, providing technical support in the review and Costing of the National Action Plan on AMR in Kenya in collaboration with AMR Secretariat, FAO and USAID MTAps**



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## **ECSA-HC UNDER THE SATBHSS PROJECT EXECUTED THE CROSS-BORDER HARMONIZATION OF TB MANAGEMENT.**

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The Southern Africa TB Health System Support (SATBHSS) project, under the auspices of the Eastern and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC), recently conducted a five-day training workshop aimed at improving cross-border TB management between Zambia and Malawi. The workshop, which took place from March 6th to March 10th 2023, was attended by 11 officers, with 6 from Malawi and 5 from Zambia.

The objective of the training was to establish a unified approach to TB control across the two countries, with the ultimate aim of improving the continuity of care for TB patients. The training focused on building capacity in TB management based on the Southern African Development Community (SADC) TB minimum standards, as well as competencies in cross-border TB management and best practices.

The five-day workshop was a valuable experience for both Zambia and Malawi, as it has enhanced their ability to scale up harmonized approaches to TB control in border towns. The

training is envisioned to bring about improved TB treatment outcomes for TB patients in border towns which is often lower than the national average, it is also expected to increase cross-border collaboration between the two countries and catalyzed the cross-border TB response.

As a result of the training and key output, both Zambia and Malawi have drafted plans for the scale-up of TB control interventions in border towns. With this success ECSA-HC through the SATBHSS project will continue to support regional initiatives that enhances regional collaboration on TB between the member states.



**Group photo: Participants that took part in the five-day training on cross border harmonization between Malawi and Zambia**



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