

SECRET

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MEMORANDUM OF THE HONOURABLE COMMISSIONER FOR HEALTH, LAGOS STATE ON PROTECTION FROM HEALTH EMERGENCIES AND RISK

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform Council on the efforts of Lagos State Government through collaboration with the Global Partnership Programme (GPP) Canada in establishing a biosafety Laboratory and further seek Council's approval for the development of a national policy, national framework on health security, including biosecurity, bio-banking and community engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Health emergencies are the health consequences of infectious diseases, natural disasters or man-made disasters. Public health emergencies caused by highly infectious diseases have the potential to kill thousands or millions of people. These threats can emerge naturally as outbreaks or pandemics, such as the Ebola virus disease, Lassa fever (seasonal), influenza (pandemic and seasonal), severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), extremely-drug resistant (XDR) tuberculosis, antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections; or they can emerge deliberately through bioterrorism.

BACKGROUND

Health security is the protection against health emergencies and other risks. It is a part of general human security. All human security threats have one thing in common and that is the centrality of people. With the Ebola outbreak, it is apt to say that the world is only as safe as the most fragile States. Therefore, safeguarding individual and collective health security depends on the ability of governments and international institutions to set priorities and allocate resources to control and mitigate the effects of disease outbreaks. Building resilient public health surveillance systems and infrastructure is crucial to combat threats from infectious diseases.

In 2014, the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) was launched to accelerate global capability and strengthen collective health security through country and inter country capacities to prevent, detect and respond to infectious disease threats both naturally occurring and intentionally released. GHSA targets are Prevention, Detection and Response. Biosecurity and biosafety are part of strategies for protection against health emergency and risks. The main focus of a BSL laboratory is to find ways to control the emerging infectious diseases, strengthening national disease surveillance and strengthening prevention, control and response systems.

ESTABLISHMENT OF LAGOS STATE BIOSAFETY LABORATORY

Following the Ebola virus disease outbreak of 2014, Lagos State Government with a view to prepare against emerging and re-emerging biological threats of local or international concern established a committee on Emerging Infectious Diseases. One of the strategic interventions designed for prevention and control of EIDs in the State is the establishment of a high consequence bio-safety and bio-containment Laboratory in collaboration with Global Partnership Programme (GPP) Canada. The design and construction of the laboratory have been completed, and the Laboratory has been shipped to Lagos, Nigeria. Installation is ongoing.

The facility would afford the State the opportunity to promptly diagnose diseases of public health importance during routine surveillance activities and during outbreaks of emerging highly pathogenic infectious diseases or incidents of environmental toxicity towards effective clinical management.

In addition, bio-samples would be stored in the biobank section of the BSL laboratory for medical research and international collaboration to fast track research and discovery.

CHALLENGES

Challenges faced in providing protection from health emergencies and risks include, Weak health systems, Irregular Supply of Drugs and other Essential Life Saving Commodities., Migration and High financial burden.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to mitigate the numerous challenges faced in executing a robust bio-security and bio-banking facility, it is essential to execute high resource mobilisation drive, improved political and financial investments, implementation of Universal Healthcare Coverage (UHC), review public health regulations, regulate international migration and promote health security and health education. The media can be engaged to improve the knowledge of the public on understanding of infectious diseases. These will empower individuals to adopt appropriate preventive behaviours and pre-empting migration. Community perceptions, human behaviour, willingness to report, and compliance with control measures are all key factors in effective disease control.

PRAYERS

Council is hereby invited to note the efforts of Lagos State Government through collaboration with the Global Partnership Programme (GPP) Canada in establishing a biosafety Laboratory.

Council is further invited to approve the development of a national policy, national framework on health security, including biosecurity, bio-banking and community engagement.

Honourable Commissioner for Health, Lagos State

June, 2018