

African Network for Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation Accredits 30 Potential Centres of Excellence and 50 Prospective Projects

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Addis Ababa, 27 May 2011 (ECA) - During a two-day meeting of the Scientific and Advisory Committee (STAC) hosted this week by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, the African Network for Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation (ANDI) recommended 30 Centres of Excellence and 50 research projects for further development.

According to Aida Opoku-Mensah, Director of ECA's ICT, Science and Technology Division, "The short listed Centres will form the first pan-African network of health institutions capable of undertaking high quality research and supporting the development of urgently needed pharmaceutical products. The network will comprise centres involved in research and development (R&D), clinical trials and manufacturing facilities, among others."



Approximately 117 applications for accreditation as Centres of Excellence were received from 26 countries across Africa.

Ms. Opoku-Mensah emphasised that promoting excellence at each stage of the process is "a key enabler in the organisation's mission to enable African researchers and manufacturers to sustainably identify, develop, register and commercialise health products designed to address Africa's unique health challenges."

With regard to the research projects approved by STAC, 50 were drawn from 207 applications that ANDI received from 33 countries across the continent.

Dr. Solomon Nwaka, Leader, Innovation Networks at World Health Organization (WHO), pointed out that: "the main aim was to select projects that are likely to have a high impact on health in Africa and should be technically and commercially viable and we believe that some of the projects may benefit from the immense expertise that already exists in the selected Centres of Excellence in health research in Africa."

The exercise demonstrated that Africa has outstanding health innovation capacity in almost all regions. It revealed the existence of centres with the capacity to formulate and deliver products to markets, according to the Information and Communication Service of the ECA.

This network of Centres of Excellence will help in the sharing of research expertise and facilities and promote collaboration in the development of drugs, vaccines and medical devices. Furthermore, it also helps ANDI and other players targeting technical support, funding and capacity-building to key areas of need or that offer great opportunities for meeting health needs.

ANDI is an Africa-led health product innovation initiative that was conceived by the World Health Organization in 2008 and is now hosted by ECA in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

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