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INITIATIVE OF H.E. PRESIDENT
MOHAMED HOSNI MOBARAK
FOR
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRICAN CENTER FOR
INFECTIOUS AND ENDEMIC DISEASES
AND HIV/AIDS

(Item proposed by the Arab Republic of Egypt)

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Introduction

African countries suffer from numerous health problems that can be prevented and controlled. Not only do these problems cause avoidable death and incapacity but also have a direct negative impact on development rates and undermine the social structure. Hence, African countries require a number of measures to support the health sector infrastructure and provide services in all health fields, particularly in combating endemic and infectious diseases as well as motherhood and childhood programmes. This in addition to upgrading training programmes that enhance the skills of health teams and exploit available possibilities as well as curb the brain drain from the African Continent towards the developed countries, in accordance with NEPAD principles.

Egypt enjoys close and distinctive relations with all African countries. For the scope of cooperation between Egypt and these countries is expanding in all fields. In fact, cooperation in the field of health and pharmaceutical production ranks high in the relations between Egypt and African countries.

The Ministry of Health and Population in Egypt has played an effective role in fostering friendship and cooperation in this field by concluding diverse cooperation agreements with Ministries of Health in several African countries.

General objectives:

The purpose of establishing the African Center for Infectious, Endemic and HIV/AIDS Diseases is to provide a center of excellence in Africa and link Ministries of Health in African countries in order to render support to preventive and therapeutic services and to upgrade the skills of health sector workers. This will help curb the spread of communicable and endemic diseases in the continent.

This new center of excellence constitutes one of the best forms of cooperation in that it can render the necessary support, research, monitoring and treatment to all sectors and provide effective health services in Africa.

This will be achieved by setting up and implementing specific and effective research and therapeutic programmes compatible with each sector. Furthermore, this center will also be responsible for formulating a master plan for training human resources in the health field. The Center will benefit from

trained African human resources, so will African and international expertise institutions in the field of public health, medicine, serums, vaccines, immunization methods and combating infection.

Activities of the Center:

- To form joint technical committees that will formulate the policy for diagnosis and treatment of endemic, communicable and HIV/AIDS diseases; to engage in development efforts; to implement and assess health programmes in order to encourage the transfer of modern technology in the field of diagnosis and treatment; to provide continuous education and means for treating the series of diseases prevailing in Africa.
- To exchange visits between experts in the field of endemic and communicable diseases in Africa.
- To cooperate and exchange experiences in the area of training, to afford continuous medical education to medical and assistance cadres; to create a mechanism for direct cooperation between specialized medical centers, research institutes and training centers in the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Ministries of Health in African countries.
- To actively engage in twinning production and marketing health services, whether in Egypt or in African countries.
- To organize medical caravans for African countries in order to extend state-of-the-art medical services; to provide Egyptian medicines and vaccines; to organize high level seminars and meetings that contribute to medical and health progress of the African continent.
- To establish specialized medical centers in African countries and exchange African experiences by providing an integrated model as well as to prepare cadres such as of doctors, nurses and technicians who can undertake early diagnosis of the disease and provide the necessary therapy.
- To twin health centers and hospitals with counterparts in African countries in order to exchange expertise at the level of specialists and other members of the health team such as nurses and technicians; to afford therapeutic opportunities to the sick and to exchange experiences through tele-medicine while ensuring the continuity of cooperation between African countries during medical weeks and scientific seminars.

- To provide African countries with medicines, scrums, vaccines and other requirements by activating existing African pharmaceutical industries with a view to ensuring availability and appropriate pricing.
- To compose an African action team for prompt intervention in case of an acute health emergency.
- To support the creation of laboratories network at the continental level for early detection of the outbreak and spreading of infectious diseases and to upgrade the efficiency of African laboratories.
- To supply means for epidemiological surveillance in order to assist in pre-empt outbreaks and to curb the spread of communicable diseases.

Activities

To combat and treat endemic and communicable and non-infectious diseases in Africa.

1. Combating HIV/AIDS

The African continent suffers one of the highest prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS. This pandemic has ravaged sub-Saharan countries. The number of those stricken by this disease in the African continent stands at more than 25 million, that is nearly two thirds of the number of those afflicted in the world. Moreover, HIV/AIDS is deemed to be the main cause of mortality in the African continent with more than 2.2 million Africans dying of AIDS last year. Such a situation demands collective action to confront this disease at the continental level. The Center shall carry out the following:

Initiative

- To raise national awareness about existing and expected effects in order to mobilize efforts to confront the HIV/AIDS epidemic. To fight discrimination and stigma associated with this disease by conducting field research with a view to learning African practices and trends in this regard.
- To protect the rights of HIV positive persons and to support policies and programmes that mitigate the social and economic impact of the disease. Moreover, to guarantee the availability of drugs within the framework of comprehensive health care and to prevent women's exposure to contagion by ensuring medication to prevent mother to child transmission.

- To set up mechanisms for strengthening strategies related to programmes: home health care – treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and tuberculosis – to improve vaccines – safe blood – to sensitize youth – voluntary check up and consultation – investment in research.
- There are three Egyptian companies that produce medicines to treat HIV/AIDS:
 - Memphis company produces Nevirapina and exports it to other countries;
 - Glaxo Egypt produces three formulas, Combivir, Retovir, Zeffix.
 - Roche company produces Viracept.

2. To eradicate Malaria in Africa

Malaria is considered one of the endemic diseases in the African continent. Nearly 90% of malaria cases at the world level are found in Africa alone. It is estimated that 300 to 500 million annual new cases break out in Africa. Malaria is also considered as one of the main causes that claims the lives of 1.5 to 2.7 million annually.

The Center's functions are:

- To find innovative ways and means for combating this disease by giving importance to the environment as it is part of the strategy for eradicating malaria in Africa. To give free medical treatment to children and pregnant mothers and ensure such treatment at all health levels; to coordinate between countries in order to launch inter-country campaign. Egypt has eradicated malaria and engages in combating the *Gambia* insect that carries the malignant malaria in Northern Sudan in cooperation with the Sudanese Ministry of Health. It is possible to benefit from the experience of the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population in the field of combating and surveillance.

3. To eradicate polio:

Although extensive efforts have been exerted to eradicate this disease in Africa, nonetheless, it continues to spread in many countries. Moreover, polio cases have risen once again reaching 885 cases in 2004 as compared to 491 in 2003. In order to eliminate this disease from Africa, the Center shall:

- Assist in expediting activities to eradicate polio by conducting field and applied researches under the guidance of the Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population in order to plan more effective national polio vaccination campaigns.

- Support initiatives related to eradicating polio by fostering cooperation between African countries in this field and vaccinating children in countries affected by conflicts.

4. To combat tuberculosis:

Although numerous successes were scored at the world level in combating tuberculosis culminating in reduced infection rates worldwide, Africa was the exception where the rate tripled since the 90s. Some attributed this to be spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that Africa alone accounts for nearly 30% of total tuberculosis cases in the world, the average annual rate for Africa stands at 149 cases per 100 thousand inhabitants. In addition, the mortality rate in Africa due to tuberculosis reaches one third. Such a situation demands collective action to confront this disease at the African level. The Center will undertake the following:

- To raise national awareness regarding the actual and expected impact in order to overcome this disease by conducting field researches to learn of African techniques, practices and trends in this regard.
- To engage in scientific and laboratory research aimed at documenting the relationship between HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis and finding practical solutions to reduce drug resistance of tuberculosis against medicines particularly among HIV/AIDS patients.
- To expand the implementation of the successful DOTS strategy which enables full recovery of tuberculosis patients in African countries.
- To complete the establishment of tuberculosis diagnosis centers in African countries in compliance with recognized world standards (Diagnosis Center for every 100-300 thousand inhabitants according to the degree of the problem).

5. Challenges of non-communicable diseases in Africa

Due to the tremendous efforts exerted by African countries in combating communicable diseases, and due to the growing exodus to cities in the African continent, a change was observed in disease patterns. For communicable diseases were not only rampant among Africans, non-communicable and endemic diseases constituted a burden and challenge to the continent such as heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, cancer and others. These endemic diseases are now among the main causes of morbidity and mortality in Africa. To confront these challenges, the Center will:

- Contribute in formulating a national programme for prevention of non-communicable diseases. Health authorities will consolidate collection of

data on the volume and impact of such diseases and mobilize all government sectors and others to cooperate in supporting healthy nutrition, launch campaigns against tobacco and propagate health awareness in other fields.

- Provide basic health care to persons afflicted with non-communicable diseases, focusing in particular on adopting holistic measures to combat tobacco and treat mental illness as well as drug and substance addiction.

6. Reform of the Health Sector:

The Center will participate in the following:

- To build trained national capacities for planning and managing the infrastructure and providing necessary financing of all activities while reducing the rate of immigration of skills in the health field from Africa to developed countries.
- To sensitize leadership in the process of health sector reform and urge governments to allocate more resources for health development. To request all countries to identify indicators required to monitor progress in implementing health sector reform.

Implementation:

The headquarters of the Center will be situated in Cairo and will be established in one of the health sites related to the activity of the Center in Egypt (Abbaseya Homeyat Hospital) African countries, friendly countries, donors, international institutions may support the establishment of this Center.

Potential of the selected Center:

- Laboratories with specialized reference (viruses-parasites-bacteriology-pathology-blood laboratory-chemistry).
- Outpatient clinics, operating theatres, intensive care unit, catheterisation, x-ray equipment, in-patient residence.
- Premises for research and training (laboratory for research and training-lecture rooms for training with internal and external information network connected to the worldwide web-telemedicine).
- An electronic library with all modern scientific references.
- Epidemiology and surveillance Center.

- To benefit from the possibilities of the Abbaseya-Homeyat Hospital and its therapeutic and diagnostic sections.

The composition of the Center:

1. Board of directors to steer the activities of the Center.
2. A coordinating committee composed of 9 members representing African countries to be selected alternately from African countries. It shall meet every 6 months to present the achievements of the Center, discuss problems confronting implementation of its activities and find ways and means to resolve them.

Budget of the Center:

- Supporting parties (African countries-Egyptian Fund for Technical Cooperation with Africa –International Organizations – Donor countries).

Staff of the Center:

- Experts from African ministries of health
- Specialists in the field of the Center's activity from diverse locations and countries
- Consultants from international organizations and agencies affiliated to the United Nations System.

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Initiative of H.E. president Mohamed Hosni Mobarak for the establishment of the African center for infectious and endemic diseases and HIV/AIDS (Item proposed by the Arab Republic of Egypt)

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