



DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION
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PRESS RELEASE

African Ministers of Health Back AU's New PMT and 4D Partnership Tech Strategies to fight COVID-19

ADDIS ABABA, 18 May 2021: African Ministers of Health have committed to support the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention's (Africa CDC), new initiatives to double down on the ongoing continental recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic at an emergency virtual summit held on 8th May. The meeting was held under the auspices of the Chair of the African Union, H.E. Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa and AU COVID-19 Champion, and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat.

The meeting comes more than a year after African Ministers of Health convened in February 2020 to discuss the COVID-19 outbreak while establishing the Africa Joint Continental Strategy on COVID-19 and the Africa Taskforce for Novel Coronavirus (AFTCOR).

During the 8th May meeting, the Africa CDC launched its new COVID-19 strategy on **Prevention, Monitoring, and Treatment (PMT)**, adapting response efforts to the fluid nature of the pandemic, both on the continent and globally.

In connection with the PMT strategy, ministers welcomed the proposal for waivers and exemptions to Intellectual Property (IP) rights tabled by the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the decision of the US to support the proposal, as part of the effort to globalise the manufacturing of vaccines and ensure equity in access and availability worldwide.

In addition to the PMT strategy, the new **4D Partnership** was also announced – a platform for multi-disciplinary, multi-dimensional, multi-departmental and multi-directional collaboration in Africa, powered by artificial intelligence and machine learning, big data and home-grown innovation. The 4D Partnership is a collaboration of several AU organs including the Commission's Department of Education, Science, Technology & Innovation; the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy & Sustainable Environment; the Department of Economic Development, Trade, Industry & Mining; the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat; and the Africa CDC.

The platform will strengthen harmonisation of use cases in health, research, education, climate response and trade, for example, the Africa CDC's [Trusted Travel](#) and Trusted Vaccines platforms. Other programs, such the Africa Pathogen Genomics Initiative (Africa PGI), will benefit from the multi-stakeholder networks of the AU Science and Technology Framework, and help to accelerate integrated diagnostic, socioeconomic, immunological and genomic data streams to better analyse patterns of disease mutations and variants spread in Africa.

The 4D partnership will also speed up the emergence of electronic exchanges in the areas of climate finance, municipal green bonds, common fisheries rights, among others, enriching the quality of the post-pandemic recovery already underway in parts of Africa. The coalition behind the 4D partnership includes AfroChampions, the African Academy of Sciences, the African Institute of Mathematical Sciences, the PanaBIOS Consortium, the African Organisation of Standards, Koldchain BioCordon and the United Nations Development Program.

The Chair of the African Union, H.E. Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, said: “The 4D Partnership is an early dividend of the recent reforms of the African Union Commission to better synergise its offerings and deliver clear impact for member states; and by leveraging the response to the pandemic to push innovation, it is going to be a critical part of how we build resilience in Africa against future catastrophes. “

The Secretary General of the AfCFTA, H.E. Wamkele Mene, said: “Integrating a continent as vast, diverse, and rich in heritage, as Africa requires an ‘every tool in the toolkit’ approach yet resources are limited, hence the need to transform action-taking in Africa using the tools the 4D platform shall make available to key stakeholders across the continent.”

“The pandemic has proven quiet resilient to our usual responses,” states Dr John Nkengasong, Director of the Africa CDC. “It is clearly time for a complete step-change in how we think about the recovery. 4D is how Africa’s continental leadership demonstrates its equality to the task.”

Assistant Administrator and Director of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa, Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa, said: “We take the opportunity given us to support Africa’s home-grown solutions and strategies very seriously and with a deep sense of commitment. As UNDP continues to play its technical lead role on the socioeconomic response to the COVID 19 pandemic, we will deepen our partnership with the AU and other key stakeholders, to advance transformative digital solutions that allow Africa to move beyond recovery, towards the 2030, sustainable development agenda.”

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About Africa CDC

Africa CDC is a specialized technical institution of the African Union which supports Member States in their efforts to strengthen health systems and improve surveillance, emergency response, prevention and control of diseases.

Learn more at: <http://www.africacdc.org>

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