

African Union Plans to Set Up Ebola Fund and Disease Control Center



Addis Ababa, January 29 (RHC)-- The African Union says it plans to launch an Ebola fund and disease control center in order to tackle the epidemic across the continent.

AU Commissioner for Social Affairs Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko said in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, that the African Center for Disease Control and Prevention would be set up by mid-2015. "It is a reality and it's going to happen," Kaloko said, adding: "We should be ready the next time. We shouldn't be caught unprepared."

The AU senior official noted that the first phase would concentrate on setting up an early warning system for the detection of the virus. He also promised to set up a major coordination center and several sub-centers across Africa.

Meanwhile, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the chairperson of the African Union Commission, also vowed to mobilize regional resources to prevent the spread of Ebola, saying: "It is time for Africa to mobilize its own resources in support of its development and take charge of its own destiny."

In November 2014, the African Development Bank in close coordination with regional business leaders set up a crisis fund to help areas hit by the Ebola outbreak. Donors pledged USD 28 million to increase support for the battle against the epidemic.

The African Union has already sent hundreds of health workers as part of its mission to tackle the outbreak in West Africa. According to the World Health Organization, the death toll from the Ebola outbreak in the three hardest-hit West African countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia has exceeded 8,000.

Ebola is a form of hemorrhagic fever, whose symptoms are diarrhea, vomiting, and bleeding. The virus spreads through direct contact with infected blood, feces, or sweat. It can be also spread through sexual contact or the unprotected handling of contaminated corpses.

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