

## Welcome...

to the CORDS May 2017 newsletter. CORDS is a Non-Governmental Organisation comprised of six international networks, working to reduce and prevent the spread of diseases by exchanging information and best practices. Our vision is a world united against infectious diseases.

Early detection helps keep infection to its area of origin, which in our increasingly mobile world is vital in stopping life threatening diseases such as Zika, Ebola and Yellow Fever. We are able to detect and respond to outbreaks at an early stage because of our expertise in building and maintaining relationships with local communities. Our knowledge of best practice is then shared across our networks, helping to improve health worldwide.



## Dr. Christophe Longuet joins CORDS as Executive Director

CORDS is delighted to welcome Dr. Christophe Longuet who joined the team in January. Dr. Longuet is a Medical Doctor specialising in tropical diseases, HIV care and public health, and was the Medical Director of Fondation Mérieux for almost 10 years. There he was responsible for improving the knowledge of health professionals on Infectiology, Vaccinology and Epidemiology and improving the access of vulnerable populations to better health services in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. During the 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa he cared for patients in Guinea with the French Red Cross and participated in therapeutic research in Sierra Leone with the University of Oxford. Dr. Christophe Longuet runs a part time HIV and travel medicine clinic at the Croix Rousse Hospital in Lyon, France.

**Dr. Christophe Longuet, said:** "It is a great honour and pleasure for me to have joined

CORDS and to serve its mission to make the world a safer place. I saw first-hand how much Ebola has disrupted the lives of the most vulnerable when I was in Guinea and Sierra Leone. Epidemics respect no borders, and many cross the boundaries between animals and humans. I am committed to further collaboration and the transfer of knowledge and skills amongst our six networks, and with new networks in partnership with international agencies and global partners.”



2018 Conference Planning Workshop

On the 20th and 21st March, a CORDS 2018 Conference Planning workshop was held in Lyon, France, supported by Skoll Global Threats Fund. The workshop was attended by 19 participants including 13 network representatives. The main objective was to prepare for the CORDS conference which is due to take place in Bangkok in January 2018 as a satellite event of the Prince Mahidol Award Conference (PMAC) which takes place from the 29th January- 3rd February 2018 with the theme 'Making the World Safe from the Threats of Emerging Infectious Diseases'. The CORDS Conference will be an opportunity to present and exchange on inter-network projects and lessons learned. More than 100 attendees are expected from more than 28 countries.





### **EAIDSNet Supports Regional Response to the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Outbreak in Uganda, East Africa**

On the 16th January 2017, a joint statement by the Uganda Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries was issued to the effect that an outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) had been confirmed in Uganda, after the mass death of wild birds. All five East African Community Partner States (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda) faced a risk of HPAI outbreak.

The National Animal Disease Diagnostic and Epidemiology Center and the Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI) later confirmed the outbreak to be due to influenza virus AH5, and on further sub-typing, UVRI identified the strain to be H5N8.

In response the East African Community Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response Network (EAIDSNet) and the East Africa Public Health Laboratory Networking Project (EAPHLNP) organised a regional reaction to involve all East African partner states. A video conference was held on 23rd January and attended by national experts on human and animal disease surveillance, environmental protection, fisheries and laboratory medicine. It was noted that each country had mobilized multi-sectoral national task force teams to plan and implement a response to the outbreak.

EAIDSNet and EAPHLNP facilitated the execution of a number of cross-border disease surveillance review missions involving specialists from all relevant sectors. The importance of risk communication and the need and ways to build capacity in network laboratories and health facilities to support disease surveillance were discussed. In addition, it was deemed necessary to strengthen the involvement of local politicians and communities. Cross-border surveillance will continue to be reviewed in the future.

For more information on this and the work of EAIDSNet please contact Dr. Willy Were [werew@ecsa.or.tzz](mailto:werew@ecsa.or.tzz) and Dr. Julius Lutwama [jjlutwama03@yahoo.com](mailto:jjlutwama03@yahoo.com)

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*Improving Influenza surveillance and pandemic response in SEE countries*  
24 February, 2017



## **Improving Influenza Surveillance and Pandemic Response in South East European Countries**

On 24th February 2017 a meeting took place in Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina, organised by the South East European Center for Surveillance and Control of Infectious Diseases (SECID). The aim of the annual meeting on Improving Influenza Surveillance and Pandemic Response in South East European Countries was to present the achievements and challenges of influenza surveillance and preparedness.

The meeting objectives were to evaluate the indicators of success and challenges of influenza surveillance and preparedness within the South East European countries, to explore the opportunities and threats to build sustainable influenza surveillance and response systems and to evaluate the outcomes of all activities in the third year of the project and the challenges for the fourth. Finally the use of vaccines within the countries was evaluated.

Amongst the attendees were representatives of CDC USA, WHO Euro and ECDC who all gave presentations on influenza and vaccine use. There was a general overview of project activity between 2013 and 2016 as well as presentations from all of the countries on their third year progress, with Avian Influenza an important topic for discussion. Each country then came up with a working plan for the fourth year of the project according to their needs. Conclusions included the need to improve the quality of sentinel surveillance, ensuring staff continue to receive training in this area; the importance of other National Influenza Centres being recognised in the region and the need to improve the influenza vaccination.

For more information on the meeting and project please see the SECID website [www.secids.com](http://www.secids.com)

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## **Launch of the West African Network for Infectious Disease Surveillance, WANIDS, in Accra, Ghana.**

From the 1st-3rd March a workshop took place in Accra, Ghana to operationalise an integrated regional platform for collection and sharing of health information in the Economic Community of West African States or ECOWAS region. The meeting organised by CORDS and the West African Health Organization, WAHO, marked the launch of the West African Network for Infectious Diseases Surveillance, WANIDS. WANIDS is made up of the 15 ECOWAS countries and has the mission to foster cooperation between the countries to enable early detection and control of infectious diseases. The meeting, which was a great success, was also an important opportunity to convene international animal and public health experts, institutional partners and key stakeholders to share expertise and best practice and plan joint initiatives to ensure the successful implementation of WANIDS.

During the event WAHO presented its plan for the strategic activities they will implement in the region in 2017 and Professor David Harper, CBE, Senior Consulting Fellow, Centre on Global Health Security, spoke about the Chatham House Data Sharing Project which provides guidance for experts on sharing health data.

**Charlanne Burke of The Rockefeller Foundation which has been supporting the development of WANIDS, said:** "Today is another landmark as we see WANIDS begin its lifesaving work, which will have a significant impact on the health and economy of the region."

**Dr Laurent Assogba, Deputy Director of WAHO, on behalf of the President of**

**ECOWAS and the General Director of WAHO, said:** “We are excited to be convening this workshop for international public health experts, institutional partners and key stakeholders to share ideas, expertise and best practices while working on developing common initiatives to ensure West African countries are in a better position to deal with major disease outbreaks such as Ebola as and when they occur”.

**Professor Ann Marie Kimball, Senior Consulting Fellow, Chatham House and Strategic Adviser for The Rockefeller Foundation, said:** *"The war is not yet won and we will need to continue to work hard to combat infectious disease."*

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Image provided by The Southern African Centre for Infectious Disease Surveillance, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Morogoro, Tanzania.

## **SACIDS Community Disease Prevention Project**

As part of its ‘Integrated human and animal disease control for Tanzanian pastoralists facing settlement Project’ the South African Centre for Infectious Disease Surveillance, SACIDS, is planning to roll out interventions to improve management of diseases at a community level. The project, funded by the Canadian International Development Centre, IDRC, is currently being implemented in the Arusha and Pwani districts in Tanzania. The proposed intervention will employ a number of health promotion tools including using community radio, disease-focused discussions and the distribution of leaflets at livestock markets.

In preparation SACIDS is currently working to establish benchmark values to measure impact. These include knowledge, attitudes and practices within the local community and will be measured again six months after the intervention.

**Dr. Mangesho, Social Anthropologist from the National Institute for Medical Research, currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow at SACIDS, said** “It is our conviction that

community radio and other means of communication will empower pastoralists in the selected districts to engage on a continuous basis with their elders and traditional leaders as well as district council officials and other stakeholders, to debate issues around human and animal diseases affecting their livelihoods”.

Community Health Reporters (CHR's) who have been trained by SACIDS are amongst the team taking part. The project is expected to not only enhance early detection, timely reporting and prompt response at all levels, but to help publicise major diseases at a community level. The success of the project to date includes the use of mobile phones for reporting. From January to February 2017, 19 livestock cases were reported in the Ngorongoro district and three in the Morogoro district.

For more information please contact Dr. Peter Mangesho [peter.mangesho@sacids.org](mailto:peter.mangesho@sacids.org)



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