



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **WAHO and Nigeria CDC team up to conduct a Yellow Fever Simulation Exercise in Lagos**

**Lagos, Nigeria, March 12, 2018** – The West African Health Organization (WAHO), in its efforts to contribute to the capacity building of ECOWAS Member States in the area of preparedness and response to epidemics, is supporting the establishment of national emergency management mechanisms for public health emergencies.

To test these mechanisms and procedures in place for the management of major public health events in the ECOWAS region, WAHO is organising a Yellow Fever Simulation Exercise (SIMEX) in Lagos in collaboration with the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

The purpose of the SIMEX is to provide various partner institutions with a national and regional coordination framework for a multi-sectoral response to a public health emergency.

This exercise will focus on an actual and large scale simulation of an epidemic of Yellow Fever. In addition to checking the viability and compatibility of existing mechanisms in their implementation, this SIMEX will not only enhance awareness among epidemic control managers but also enhance their ability to effectively and timely respond to any Yellow Fever epidemics.

The focus on Yellow Fever has arisen because of the re-emergence of Yellow Fever in Nigeria after many years. Since September 2017, Nigeria has been facing Yellow Fever outbreaks that increasingly threaten urban areas. At least 358 suspected cases have been recorded in 16 states where the disease has already led to 45 deaths.

The authorities in Nigeria have already taken the lead in finding a lasting solution to the problem. A total of 25 million people are scheduled to be vaccinated in a campaign that has already begun in three states: Zamfara in the North-East, Kogi in the Center and Kwara in the West; and health workers have already been mobilized across the country. The country is also strengthening its routine immunization coverage.

WAHO as per its mandate remains committed in supporting Nigeria and the SIMEX being jointly organised with the Nigeria CDC with the financial support from the World Bank-REDISSE project, is one of such projects to support Member states.

Expected outcomes from the SIMEX include:

- Improved knowledge of actors and stakeholders on risk factors for a possible outbreak of Yellow Fever cases in Nigeria and the ECOWAS region;
- Strengthened preparedness and response measures of Lagos State (Nigeria) for a possible outbreak of Yellow Fever cases are tested;
- Team spirit and multi-sectoral cooperation within the ECOWAS Regional Rapid Response Team (ERRRT) members and epidemics control managers are strengthened.

The main findings and lessons learnt during the SIMEX will be documented, shared and disseminated across Nigeria, ECOWAS region and to relevant stakeholders.

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**About The West African Health Organization (WAHO):** WAHO is the specialized institution of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) responsible for health issues. Its mission is to attain the highest possible standard and protection of health of the peoples in the sub-region through the harmonization of the policies of the Member States, pooling of resources, and cooperation with one another and with others for a collective and strategic fight against the health problems of the sub-region".

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