



# PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ECOWAS REGIONAL CENTRE FOR SURVEILLANCE AND DISEASE CONTROL STARTS OPERATIONS**

**Abuja, Nigeria, February 21, 2018** – The West African Health Organization (WAHO) has announced the historic launch of the West Africa Regional Centre for Surveillance and Disease Control Headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2018. The new Centre will work with member States to assure the health security of the West African region.

The establishment of the ECOWAS Regional Centre for Surveillance and Disease Control (ECOWAS-RCSDC) was approved in May 2015 by the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, with a unanimous decision for Nigeria to serve as host. This decision fits into the framework of the African Union's initiative of establishing a Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in Africa, which will have regional branches based on the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) of the African Union.

ECOWAS-RCSDC will serve a specialised agency of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) under the authority of WAHO. The main goal of the RCSDC is to strengthen Member States' health systems and enhance the region's capacity for epidemic prevention, detection and control. The establishment of this new Centre was further driven by the lessons from the Ebola outbreak between 2014 and 2015, which affected countries in West Africa.

The West African Health Organization (WAHO) has worked with the Government of Nigeria through the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), to expedite the implementation and operationalisation of the ECOWAS Regional Centre for Surveillance and Disease Control (ECOWAS- RCSDC). The NCDC has hosted the RCSDC since its establishment, and will continue to support this transition process.

In a bid to fully operationalise the Centre, WAHO has embarked on series of actions, with significant progress made. These include the establishment of the Centre's Headquarters together with the Government of Nigeria, the recruitment of staff and the development of its 2018 workplan. Over the week, technical partners from ECOWAS countries will meet in Abuja to facilitate the joint implementation of the 2018 work plan.

The Honorable Minister of Health of the Togolese Republic who is the current Chairman of the ECOWAS Assembly of Health Ministers, the Nigerian Honourable Minister of Health, Director General of WAHO and technical partners and stakeholders from the ECOWAS countries will witness the launch of the RCSDC Headquarters in Abuja.

***The ECOWAS Regional Center for Surveillance and Disease Control is the West Africa's response to preventing and/or managing epidemics.***

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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".

For more information on WAHO, please visit <http://www.wahooas.org> / <https://twitter.com/OoasWaho> / <https://www.facebook.com/ooaswaho>