PRESS RELEASE

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EU-IGAD COVID-19 response programme delivers donation of mobile laboratory truck to the Ministry of Health of Kenya

A mobile laboratory truck was handed over to the Ministry of Health of Kenya today in Nairobi as part of the recently completed European Union-funded EU-IGAD COVID-19 Response Programme, with the objective to support countries in the IGAD region to strengthen disease surveillance and the healthcare system.

The mobile lab, worth EUR 167,300 (around USD $178,000), will be used to collect specimens from suspected patients across the country and within the cross-border areas in case of an outbreak of an infectious disease and for sample transportation to the nearest lab for testing. It will be stationed in the National Public Health Laboratories in Nairobi and will be deployed to support the outbreak interventions in the country including the cross-border sites and as per the need. The mobile laboratory will help the medical workers to reach out to the patients from the cross-border areas, areas of emergency response, truck drivers in main truck stops and parking areas as well as people crossing the border in case of mass population movement or displacement.

EU Ambassador to Kenya, Ms Henriette Geiger, commented on the event: “I welcome today’s handover of a mobile laboratory equipment to the Government of Kenya. While we have luckily overcome the most difficult phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am confident that it will allow Kenya to tackle other public health challenges going forward.”

The IGAD Head of Mission to the Republic of Kenya, Dr. Fatuma Adan, said that the donation of the mobile laboratory to the Republic of Kenya will serve to support timely preparedness and response to disease outbreaks in the country. Dr. Fatuma commented further that the donation of the Mobile lab despite being in part of the support to enhance COVID-19 response, it will go a long way in enhancing future pandemic preparedness and response.

The UNOPS Kenya Multi-Country Office Project Manager, Lilian Omollo, said that COVID-19 pandemic only confirmed that strengthening the health care systems is highly important around the globe. “Today
we are delivering the mobile laboratory truck, procured through the recently completed EU-IGAD COVID-19 Response Project, to support the strengthening of the health care system and contribute to the better medical services for the people in Kenya.”

Previously under the programme, Kenya received three ambulances and one field vehicle, 1,826,161 PPEs (Personal Protective Equipment), 27,016 COVID-19 test kits and two PCR machines donated to the hospitals in Moyale and Lamu cross border sites to support surveillance and laboratory services in Kenya. This was part of the IGAD programme’s effort to improve the health response, strengthening national capacities and support cross-border communities and vulnerable populations especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Programme implemented in the period April 2020 - December 2023 focused on critical/priority cross border areas in the region, refugee settlements and aims to enhance IGAD’s coordination capacity, increase access to health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, combat gender-based violence, improve community engagement, ensure borders are safe for trade and promote digital health solutions.

Funded by the European Union, the €60 million EU-IGAD COVID-19 Response Project was managed by UNOPS PMU Djibouti and coordinated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) with support of the implementing partners - International Organization for Migration (IOM), TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) with the aim to provide a comprehensive and coordinated COVID-19 response and its social economic impact on cross border areas and refugees across the IGAD region namely: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda as well as to strengthen the health care systems in these countries.

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