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Africa Health Security Accelerator (AHSA) launched to Strengthen Pandemic Preparedness and Response

The Ministry of Health, through the Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC), in partnership with leading global health partners, has initiated the establishment of the Africa Health Security Accelerator (AHSA) – a transformative initiative set to redefine Africa’s epidemic preparedness and health security landscape.

Hosted by RBC, the three-day co-creation workshop brought together experts from key continental and global players in public health including Jhpiego, Africa CDC, John Hopkins University, BioPrevail, Villgro Africa, and other strategic partners. The Accelerator will close operational and coordination gaps in Africa’s pandemic preparedness and response systems. It will foster collaboration, innovation, and the rapid deployment of solutions for epidemic intelligence, biosafety and biosecurity, and health research across the continent.

Why it matters

Africa bears nearly 30% of the world’s epidemic threats, yet continues to face challenges including siloed preparedness efforts, fragmented surveillance systems, limited biosafety infrastructure, and a critical shortage of epidemic-ready health workers. Recent outbreaks have shown that despite progress, significant gaps remain in the ability to prevent, rapidly detect, and respond to health threats.

The Africa Health Security Accelerator (AHSA) will address these gaps through sovereign leadership, regional collaboration, and the integration of cutting-edge technologies, such as **AI-driven analytics, genomic surveillance, and innovative funding models**. By unlocking siloed investments and bridging

strategic partnerships, AHSA will catalyze a self-reliant, rapid-response ecosystem for epidemic preparedness across Africa.

Leadership and Operations

The Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC), in collaboration with the John Hopkins Program for International Education in Gynecology and Obstetrics (Jhpiego), will oversee the technical and operational management of AHSA which is currently in its formative phase. A multi-institutional task force is refining its governance and operational framework, including how it will engage member states, mobilize resources, define areas of focus, and deliver measurable outcomes. The finalized framework will be validated and announced in the coming months.

“Our greatest strength lies in collaboration,” said Prof. Muvunyi Mambo Claude, Director General of RBC. “This accelerator is a continental call to action to build resilient systems that protect lives and secure our future.”

Dr. Merawi Aragaw, Head of Surveillance & Disease Intelligence Division at Africa CDC, emphasized that “disasters should not be the accelerator for improving our health security architecture, rather we need to create an environment for incubation of thoughts and innovations”; and commended RBC and its partners for pursuing this proactive initiative.

“Jhpiego has a proven track record of successfully facilitating coalitions of diverse partners and effectively managing high-impact accelerators,” said Dr. Virgile Kikaya, Technical Director for Global Health Security at Jhpiego. “We are thrilled to bring our expertise to this transformative initiative, which will improve global health security across Africa and help the continent prepare for future health threats.”

As Africa strengthens its capacity to prevent and respond to health threats, the Africa Health Security Accelerator (AHSA) stands as a bold step toward a

coordinated, technology-driven, and self-sustaining health security ecosystem. It reflects Africa's growing leadership and innovation — ensuring the continent is not only prepared for future epidemics but also shaping the global agenda for health resilience.

About the partners

Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC) is one of the implementing agencies of the Rwandan Ministry of Health. It was established in 2011 through a merger of fourteen key health institutions to integrate service delivery, streamlining resources and improving coordination. RBC strives to improve the health of the Rwandan population through program implementation, provision of diagnostic services, advancing healthcare preparedness and spearheading the research and clinical trial ecosystem.

Jhpiego creates bold, practical solutions that close gaps in the health system and transform health care for women, children, and communities. Jhpiego partners with governments and communities to co-create and scale up low-cost, high-impact, innovative solutions that save lives and ensure healthier futures for women, children and families.

Villgro Africa is an incubator and impact investor supporting emerging healthcare businesses in Africa. Villgro offers emerging companies a personalized incubation experience to help effectively scale ideas and navigate the African startup ecosystem.

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