

CEPI | New vaccines for a safer world

Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations

Newsletter 12 May 2017

Address fom CEO

"I am happy that I have been able to make some contribution. When I look back at the years gone by, perhaps my one regret would be that I was not able to do more."

– Ahmed Kathrada, letter to Sylvia Neame

Last week I had the pleasure of attending the World Economic Forum – Africa meeting in Durban, South Africa, which began with a session on “Leadership in an Era of Disruption” that probed the question of how Africa’s leaders can better respond to the many challenges they face. At the end of the session, the moderator asked the audience to remain seated for a memorial video honoring Ahmed Kathrada, one of the last surviving and youngest of the Rivonia Trialists who had been imprisoned with Nelson Mandela on Robben Island, who passed away in March. It was an inspiring session, honoring the sacrifices of the past and looking with hope toward the future.

In Durban, I met many inspiring individuals: Victor Ochen, the Director of AYINET, an organization that addresses the needs of children displaced by conflict, who in 2015 became the youngest African ever to be nominated for a Nobel prize; Keller Rinaudo, an entrepreneur who founded Zipline, which has established the world’s first commercial drone delivery system -- in Rwanda, delivering blood products to remote hospitals in as little as 30 minutes; and John Nkengasong, the first director of the recently established Africa CDC – to name just a few. Each has an incredible story to tell, and each is making the continent – and the world – a better place.

CEPI is part of this unfolding story. African scientists still command too small a share of Africa’s GDP but increasingly are asserting their right to set the science agenda for the continent. CEPI, for its part, is committed to working closely with African scientists and institutions to develop products and design clinical trials that serve the needs of their communities. While the World Economic Forum was convening in South Africa, a meeting on Ebola, hosted by President Condé of Guinea, took place in Conakry. In her opening remarks at that meeting, Margaret Chan, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, said “A safe and efficacious Ebola vaccine was the world’s best gift during 2016” and highlighted the contributions of scientists from Guinea, the Guinea national medicine and regulatory agency, and the national ethics committee who worked with the international team to complete the ring vaccination study there. She also highlighted the role of CEPI in contributing to global preparedness for such threats in the future.

This week, in London, CEPI’s Scientific Advisory Committee reviewed the white papers submitted in response to CEPI’s first call for proposals. The best of these will now be developed into full proposals. CEPI is taking its first definitive steps toward fulfilling its promise.

Read Richard Hatchett’s Op-ed: [Africa needs an insurance policy against future epidemics](#)

Richard Hatchett, CEPI CEO

Conclusions from SAC

The third Scientific Advisory Committee meeting convened at Wellcome Trust on 10-11 May 2017. Day one of the two day meeting was focussed on discussing step 1 applications for the Lassa, MERS & Nipah Call for Proposals and day two addressed important strategic issues, including the changing role of the Scientific Advisory Committee as CEPI's organizational structure evolves, best practices for managing the future CEPI portfolio, and the results for CEPI's recent Request for Information on Rapid Response Platforms. This was the first CEPI SAC meeting that CEPI CEO Richard Hatchett has attended and after the meeting he said "The discussions over the last two days were profoundly productive and will shape our efforts as we make our first investments and establish our scientific program. CEPI is deeply fortunate to be able to draw upon such a skilled and dedicated group of advisers."

Lassa fever outbreak in Nigeria

The Nigeria Office of the World Health Organization (WHO) on 3rd March 2017 announced that Lassa fever outbreak had erupted in Borno State, Nigeria. This is the first outbreak in Nigeria in almost 50 years; the last confirmed outbreak of the deadly disease was in 1969. Borno State is an area of conflict and is currently under humanitarian crisis. WHO has been on the ground supporting the government of Nigeria to contain the outbreak, but has not yet confirmed the number of deaths due to the outbreak. Other media outlets reported 66 deaths due to Lassa (Africa News 2 May 2017).

CEPI is closely following recent developments of the outbreak.



CEPI at the ERINHA conference

CEPI participated at the ERINHA conference launching the European Research Infrastructure on Highly Pathogenic Agents' scientific strategy, and was invited to give a presentation about CEPI.

ERINHA brings together the complementary expertise and research capacities of 12 European partners to prevent and respond to the spread of epidemics caused by highly pathogenic micro-organisms.

The meeting was very well attended and presentations were given from different public health agencies, WHO, ECDC, industry representatives and IMI, EC and BARDA. The need for building capacity on BSL4 labs and also to share scientific knowledge and methodologies in this area was highlighted by many of the speakers and participants.

CEPI at the Canadian Vaccine Innovation Conference

CEPI attended the Canadian Vaccine Innovation Conference in Montreal 10 May and was part of a panel discussing funding of new vaccine development.

The conference's topics included emerging disease vaccines, global health vaccines against parasites and TB, as well as vaccine technologies. Around 100 academic, industry and government representatives involved in vaccine research participated.

CEPI is well known in Canada's vaccine research community, and there is a great interest in CEPI's activities.

The website of the conference can be found [here](#).



CALL TO ACTION

Berlin, 28 April 2017

"Call to Action"

We would like to encourage our partners to take a look at this "Call to Action" directed at the G20 Stakeholders. This Call to Action strongly urges the G20 to commit investment in research, innovation and development of innovative health technologies to counter threats posed by Antimicrobial Resistance, Poverty-Related and Neglected Diseases and pandemics.

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