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The GHSA Emergency Supply Chain Framework Helps Countries to Be Prepared for Epidemics

Infectious diseases have a profound impact on economic development of nations. This is particularly relevant for developing countries, where new or resurging infections pose enormous challenges to already fragile health systems. Communicable diseases are the leading cause of mortality in all African nations (WHO, 2017). International experts predict that pandemic and epidemic outbreaks are likely to become more complex and challenging, posing major obstacles to improving public health. The launch of the Global Health Security Agenda in 2014, a partnership of nearly 50 nations, international organizations, and non-governmental stakeholders, elevated the importance of building capacity to mitigate the effects of pathogenic infectious diseases and other biological threats.

As a part of the GHSA effort to help countries be better prepared for emergencies such as the recent outbreak of Ebola, the USAID Global Health Supply Chain – Technical Assistance Francophone Task Order developed the GHSA Emergency Supply Chain Framework. Within the Framework, the Emergency Supply Chain Playbook serves as a set of tools, guides, standard operating procedures, and protocols to help countries prepare and respond to epidemic and pandemic health emergencies. The project has successfully piloted the Playbook in Cameroon, where it has been customized for the country’s context, has been adopted, and is now being incorporated into the national emergency preparedness and response strategy. The Framework is now available to GHSA member nations, and several countries, including Kenya, have already expressed interest in customization of the Framework to their context.

While global health security is a shared responsibility that depends upon collaboration among multiple sectors across nations, empowering individual countries to prevent, detect, and respond to epidemics is a key step toward a world safe and secure from infectious disease threats. By setting clear steps required to ensure adequate availability of the emergency supplies and commodities to respond to the infectious disease threats, the GHSA Emergency Supply Chain Framework helps countries to be prepared for epidemics and to respond to them effectively and efficiently.

Photo: U.S. Ambassador Peter Barlerin and the Minister of Public Health of Cameroon André Mama Fouda at the Closing Meeting of the customized Playbook for Cameroon.