East African NCD Alliance convenes to set workplan priorities in Uganda

Language Undefined

The East African NCD alliance (EANCDA), representing Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zanzibar, convened in Kampala for an AGM and capacity building workshop from the 31st of March to the 2nd of April, 2017.

The meeting took place with support from the Danish NCD Alliance thanks to the Civil Society Fund financed by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The workshop, attended by approximately 30 participants, was used to review progress to date and discuss NCD advocacy strategies for the year ahead as part of the regional build up towards the 2018 UN High Level Meeting on NCDs.

> Cristina Parsons Perez, capacity development director at the NCD Alliance, described the event as "a valuable knowledge-sharing opportunity that enabled rich group discussions regarding the regional alliance's collective strengths and future directions, setting the foundations for a strategic planning process".

After a day-long board meeting, the workshop was opened by remarks from Dr. Tom Mwambu (chair of the Uganda NCD alliance) and Professor Gerald Yonga (Chair of the EANCDA).

Dr. Gerald Mutungi, the Head of NCD Programme in the Ugandan Ministry of Health, addressed the advocates present, pressing upon them the need to ensure widespread awareness and understanding of NCDs, as well as the importance of all sectors stepping up to the challenge.

David Mulabi (CEO of the EANCDA) proceeded to set the scene for the workshop by laying out the alliance's advocacy activities to date. Six national alliances, representing Burundi, Zanzibar, Tanzania, Rwanda, Kenya, and Uganda, updated the group on their achievements, plans, and current challenges.

The workshop allowed for planning around forthcoming benchmarking and accountability efforts in the region. Dr. Mucumbitsi of the Rwanda NCD Alliance, shared lessons learned with the 2014 'Civil Society Benchmark Report: Responses to NCDs in East Africa' [1] by EANCDA .

Dr. Parsons Perez offered insights on how the 2018 UN High Level Meeting relates to these efforts as well as the opportunities it presents for national and regional advocacy.

Josianne Galea, capacity development officer at the NCD Alliance shared the benchmarking tool being prepared by the NCD Alliance in order to support accountability efforts at the regional and national level.

EANCDA strategised on how to adapt such a tool and how to apply it to the East African region and agreed to a concrete workplan for the year ahead.

> The year ahead promises to be a full and exciting one for the East African NCD Alliance. The regional alliance is strategising on how to engage the media and to use a people-centered approach to NCD advocacy.

These strategies have found resonance with the NCD Alliance's Our Views, Our Voices [2] initiative which aims to increase the meaningful involvement of people living with NCDs in the NCD response.

The EANCDA is excellently placed to spearhead NCD advocacy and accountability efforts in the region ahead of the 2018 UN High Level Meeting and beyond.

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