



PMAC | PRINCE MAHIDOL
AWARD CONFERENCE **2018**



PARALLEL SESSION 2.1

BEYOND MERS AND ZIKA: ARE WE PREPARED FOR THE NEXT BIG EPIDEMIC?



| BACKGROUND

Over the past decade, Ebola, MERS, highly pathogenic avian influenza and, more recently, the Zika virus outbreaks have demonstrated the ability of epidemics to devastate communities through both extraordinary losses of life and severe morbidity as well as adverse social and economic impacts that jeopardize global health security. These recent disease outbreaks have not only made evident countries' lack of preparedness to adequately prevent, detect and respond to epidemics, but also the extent to which measures must cut across governance levels and all sectors of society in order to truly be effective. Furthermore, only one third of countries have met their commitments under the International Health Regulations (IHR). And although several tools and frameworks have been developed (by WHO, USAID, CDC, OIE, etc.) to provide guidance for countries to develop country epidemic preparedness and response plans, these are generally disease specific, have not been updated or tested through routine exercises, remain largely underfunded and are, therefore, not fully operational. As a result, many countries remain unprepared to prevent, detect, mitigate risks and respond to health threats and disease epidemics before they cause devastating consequences in the livelihoods of communities and the economies of countries.

| OBJECTIVES

- To present country experiences on strengthening IHR core capacities, including efforts for effective coordination, partnership models and financing mechanisms to strengthen health security.
- To identify critical elements needed for sustainable, inclusive, and effective preparedness at country level and propose solutions for more effective epidemic preparedness guidance.
- To discuss gaps in the current guidance and frameworks that need to be filled to develop country epidemic preparedness and response plans.



Panelist

Isabella Ayagah

IHR Focal Point

Ministry of Health
Kenya

Dr. Isabella Ayagah is with the Ministry of Health, Kenya. She has a working experience of 10 years with 9 years experience in Global Health Affairs and Diplomacy. She has played a key role in influencing national, regional and global health agenda through bilateral and multilateral engagements on behalf of the Government of Kenya and the East African Region. She also facilitated capacity building in Global Health Diplomacy for health ministers and over 150 senior government officials from the East, Central and Southern Africa- Health Community (ECSA-HC) member states since 2009. Dr. Ayagah has been in the frontline towards the establishment of the Eastern African Regional Collaborating Centre (RCC) of the Africa CDC hosted in Nairobi, Kenya. She was also part of the team that lead the JEE assessment process in Kenya. She is currently coordinating the Biological Threat Reduction Projects and IHR 2005 within the Ministry of Health and also provides technical support to the Eastern Africa RCC.