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WHO Donates \$1.6 million worth of drug to Ethiopia for Influenza A (H1N1) Preparedness

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The World Health Organization (WHO) assists the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Republic Ministry of Health (FMoH) in its emergency preparedness and response to Influenza A H1N1 that is spreading from human to human and was first detected in April 2009 in Mexico. Thus the World Health Organization (WHO) donated 103,344 doses of Tamiflu Caps that worth USD 1,601, 988.40 (17,862,170 in birr) on Saturday 23 May 2009 as part of the country's emergency preparedness to the new Influenza A H1N1 virus.

Upon receiving the aforementioned drug, Dr. Kebede Worku, State Minister of Health, thanked WHO for its assistance. According to him, it is a significant contribution for Ethiopia's preparedness. "Yes the

threat is there" Dr. Kebede underscored, "we are following the matter closely and have established a quarantine team at the airport."

Dr Fatoumata Nafu-Traoré, WHO Representative, on her part noted that her office is glad that the Ethiopian government not only took the matter seriously, but also put in place the necessary preventive measures against Influenza A (H1N1). "So far no case is observed in Africa, but we will have to remain vigilant as a pandemic is imminent (phase 5)" Dr. Nafu-Traoré added.

According to Dr. Nafu-Traoré, WHO is appreciative of Ethiopia's preventive measures against Influenza A (H1N1). In addition to the provision of drugs, WHO is engaged



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in technical support. Thus, in collaboration with the ministry, standard procedures have been prepared. Interim Standard Case Definition (SCD) prepared and passed on to all Regional Health Bureaus. Furthermore, the SCD and alert letters are being communicated to all health institutions via Training of Trainers (ToT) on Pandemic Influenza to cascade the training at local level, to strengthening the national reference laboratory, to strengthen diseases surveillance

and early warning, to build capacity for Rapid Response Team (RRT) among others. WHO is also engaged in mobilising resources for the emergency with the support of UN Resident Coordinator and other partners.

At the end of the handover ceremony that took place at the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health, the State Minister affirmed his ministry's commitment to always work in partnership with WHO.

