

Abstract Title: “South-South Cooperation for Strengthening Health Systems to address HIV/AIDS Challenge in Africa.” 112/407

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Keywords: South-South Cooperation, Health Systems, Strengthening, Developing Countries, Africa

Description of the Problem: AIDS has spread to every inhabited continent in the world with estimated 90 to 95 percent occurring in the developing countries, primarily in Africa with 83% of the AIDS deaths killing ten times more people than war. One of the most significant barriers to achieving universal access to HIV-AIDS treatment and prevention is the lack of health infrastructure, manpower and access to medicines and supplies. In order to address the crisis and achieve the MDGs strong health systems are essential. South-South Cooperation (SSC) is an excellent example of the way developing countries can help each other to accomplish much more than they can individually achieve and is an innovative, cost-effective and result oriented modality for transfer or exchange among developing countries of relevant knowledge and experience in the field of Health.

Activities carried out and results obtained: Health system strengthening involves activities directed to improving interrelated components of health systems in order to achieve more equitable and sustained improvements across health services and health outcomes. SSC can strengthen health systems through the launching of inter-country projects, training and fellowships, research and documentation. Regional Health Networks, exchanges of expertise, advocacy and policy dialogue, training and joint projects are carried out in many countries through SSC. Strategic growth and direction of policy advocacy also takes into account broader health system strengthening, and integration of other multi-sectoral drivers related to AIDS.

Lessons Learned and Next Steps: A common voice is needed to push collaboration mechanisms that are aligned with needs of the African countries. Technical cooperation as well as the political will of stakeholders to promote Health Systems through SSC will reduce the burden of HIV/AIDS in Africa. To achieve stronger results in the countries we serve, we must strengthen the link between national, regional and global levels, paying due attentions to sub-regions and work together as one team. Achievements and lessons from one country can eliminate the need of trial and another, thereby reducing costs and enhancing efficiency. In a scenario where resources – whether financial or technical - are really scarce, such collaborative efforts can unlock potential resources.