



In Search of Better Health

PRESS RELEASE

To: News & Sports Editors

Subject: KEMRI to Establish Anti-Doping Laboratory in Uasin Gishu County

Venue: Uasin Gishu County Governor's Office

Date: Friday, 13th, January 2023

The Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) and the County Government of Uasin Gishu are working on modalities that will see the establishment of an Anti-Doping Facility in the county.

A feasibility of the proposed facility is under consideration by the Kenya Antidoping Agency (ADAK), the Ministry of Sports and other agencies for what would be the first accredited anti-doping facility, not just in the country, but the Eastern African region.

Already, the Uasin Gishu County Government has earmarked a site for this facility in Eldoret and KEMRI, through the Ministry of Health has applied to the National Treasury to fund the construction of the facility by mid this year. The Institute is to partner with ADAK, WADA, and Athletics Kenya among others to ensure success of this project.

The widespread use of doping products and procedures has an impact not only on the health of the athletes but also on the perception/integrity of sport. Kenya is a Category A country under the Anti-Doping Rules of World Athletics, which means its athletes must undergo at least three no-notice tests. At least 55 Kenyan athletes are currently banned and eight provisionally suspended, according to 2022 report by the Athletics Integrity

Unit (AIU), an independent body formed by World Athletics to combat doping in the sport.

The doping crisis is threatening the sport and the careers of athletics in the country. The Kenya Ministry of Sports and indeed the Kenya Government has acknowledged the doping crisis and has committed to taking firm measures to protect and uphold the integrity of athletics in the country and treating it as a matter of top strategic national interest. However, there are several challenges the country is facing to stem the tide of doping among its athletes, one of which is the absence of an accredited laboratory to support testing.

Currently, samples collected from Kenyan athletes are sent to Germany or South Africa for analysis. This is not only expensive and drains the country's meagre foreign exchange resources but also does not assure of one-time integrity of the samples due to the long procedures and bureaucracy encountered in transportation, customs clearances, and other various handling processes. Quite frequently, due to this, multiple samples have to be collected at different times from the athlete increasing costs and inconveniences. This occurs despite the country having adequate technical capacity and facilities to carry out doping testing.

KEMRI is a leading biomedical research institution in Kenya established under the State Corporations Act, as the national body responsible for carrying out Health Research, Innovation, Capacity-building, and Service delivery for the improvement of human health and quality of life, and advice the Government on matters related thereto Health. Through this, KEMRI has established state-of-the-art laboratory infrastructure spread across the country in Nairobi, Kisumu, Kilifi, Busia, and Kericho for medical research and clinical testing. The majority of the KEMRI labs are internationally certified and adhere to strict international standards.

In tandem with the facilities are highly trained and experienced laboratory scientists and technologists supporting sample testings derived not only from Kenya but the East African region. In a bid to cover the other parts of the country in the advent of devolution, new laboratory facilities are being established in Kirinyaga, Mandera, Kwale, and Eldoret. The Eldoret facility, in particular, is earmarked to prioritize sports health research including anti-dope testing. Eldoret is the epicenter of Kenya's international sporting prowess and the site most hit by the doping scandals in the country.

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