



In Search of Better Health

PRESS RELEASE

TO: NEWS EDITORS & REPORTERS
SUBJECT: KEMRI'S PARTNERSHIP WITH UNIVERCELLS GROUP
DATE: THURSDAY, 30TH MARCH 2023

NAIROBI-KENYA: Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) and Unizima S.A. ("Unizima"), an affiliate of Univercells Group, in Belgium have initiated a collaboration for the establishment of a Bio-manufacturing Training Hub in the country.

His Excellency the President William Ruto who was on a tour of Unizima's biomanufacturing company, in Jumet, Belgium, accompanied by government officials among them Cabinet Secretary for Health Susan Nakhumicha Wafula, Acting Director General, KEMRI, Prof. Elijah Songok among others, announced on Wednesday, 29th March, 2023, that Kenya and Belgium have agreed to establish a biomanufacturing training hub in the Kenya under Unizima, a Univercells Group a Belgium Biotech company.

Under the initiative, KEMRI will partner with Unizima to advance and formalize their commitment to building a thriving biopharma skills base in Kenya and the wider East Africa region. The collaboration will include among other areas, building the right training and research ecosystem, that will ensure that end to end research and development and manufacturing of biologicals, expertise, advisory support, and technology transfer. Kenyan healthcare and research leaders who are driving this initiative include; KEMRI, Kenyatta University Teaching Referral and Research Hospital, Kenya Biovax Institute, Egerton University and the Pharmacy and Poison Board.

As Kenya prepares for significant inwards investment in biotechnology and biomanufacturing over the coming years, the government is building the human capital and workforce development needed to ensure this investment brings real improvement in access to vaccines and biotherapeutics for patients in Kenya and the region.

This project is in line with the governments agenda of advancing the economic

pillar of local manufacturing and the development objective on Universal Health Coverage (UHC). In his remarks during the meeting, the President stated as follows;

“The Government of Kenya is committed and determined to realise the constitutional right to health in the shortest time possible by delivering a universal health coverage. We are therefore delighted to initiate a collaboration with Unizima and the Univercells Group as we share a common mission and values. This new partnership is an important step towards building local training and workforce capacities in Kenya, which is crucial for health and wellbeing of the fast-growing Kenyan population”.

KEMRI’s Ag. Director General Prof. Elijah Songok welcomed the move citing that KEMRI will be at the forefront in leading other Kenyan institution in providing Research and Development. **“We are excited about this partnership with Unizima in Belgium that will surely provide KEMRI with expertise, advisory support, training and technology particularly in the area of biomanufacturing ecosystem which is fundamental to the Kenyan people. KEMRI is living its mission of providing leadership in human health research, capacity building and service delivery, and this landmark initiative with the Belgians is a clear indication.”** He stated, during the groundbreaking announcement in Belgium. ‘This therefore marks a new journey for KEMRI in advancing its commitment to carry out Research for better health in the country’ he added.

Kindly, find attached a link to material for publication. <https://we.tl/t-QNjC4XZjIW>
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About KEMRI

The Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) is a State Corporation established in Kenya in 1979 through the Science and Technology (Repealed) Act, Cap 250 of the Laws of Kenya operated under the Science Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 as the national body responsible for carrying out research in human health in Kenya. Currently, KEMRI operates under Legal Notice No. 35 of March 2021 KEMRI has grown from its humble beginning over 40 years ago to become a regional leader in human health research. The Institute currently ranks as one of the leading Centers of excellence in health research both in Africa as well as globally.