In Search of Better Health

Press Release

KENYA JOINS GLOBAL DENGUE ALLIANCE

NAIROBI/KUALA LUMPUR – 27 OCTOBER 2026 – Kenya has become the first African country to join the Dengue Alliance, with the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) becoming part of the global partnership dedicated to advancing dengue treatment research. The country's entry into the Alliance was formally announced during its meeting held on 27 October in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Established in 2022, the Dengue Alliance brings together research institutions in dengue-endemic countries to accelerate the development of safe, effective, affordable, and accessible treatments for dengue. Its membership includes the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) and research institutions from Brazil, Malaysia, India, and Thailand, with Kenya now joining the international collaboration.

'*Dengue is a growing public health concern in Africa, but its true burden remains underestimated due to underdiagnosis and underreporting. Through the Dengue Alliance, KEMRI will contribute African expertise and evidence to strengthen global efforts to advance dengue research, surveillance, diagnostics, and clinical management,*' said Dr Erick Muok, Acting Director of Research and Development at KEMRI.

This new membership will expand the geographic and scientific reach of the Alliance, creating new avenues for dengue research on much-needed treatments, and ensure patients from the African continent are prioritized in future studies.

'We are pleased to welcome KEMRI to the Dengue Alliance. Their expertise in clinical research, diagnostics, surveillance, and outbreak response will help ensure dengue research responds to the needs of affected populations in Africa,' said Dr André Siqueira, Head of the Global Dengue Programme at DNDi.

'Dengue is no longer a disease confined to traditionally endemic regions, and addressing it requires global cooperation. While we have seen important advancements in vaccines and vector control, there is still no specific treatment for dengue and more research is needed to close this critical gap,' he added.

The expansion of the Dengue Alliance comes amid growing concerns about dengue as an emerging public health threat in Africa, where there is increasing consensus that the burden is substantially underestimated.

Kenya is also experiencing an expanding dengue epidemiological footprint. All four dengue virus serotypes have been detected in the country since its first reported epidemic in 1982, and recent dengue transmission has been reported beyond traditionally affected coastal areas, including northern and western Kenya, as well as areas bordering Uganda, South Sudan, and Ethiopia.

According to the WHO, from January to August 2026, Kenya had reported almost 10,000 cases, representing a substantial increase from the 4,300 cases reported in 2025, and the 1,400 cases reported in 2024.

Recent DNDi-led epidemiological studies in Senegal, Ghana, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have revealed that dengue transmission in Africa is also more widespread than previously recognized. This underreported burden can hinder timely diagnosis, outbreak preparedness, and effective allocation of resources for prevention and control. Detailed results from these studies are expected to be published in early 2027 and will contribute to a stronger evidence base for dengue policy and decision-making in Africa.

Alliance partners are also working to address the lack of specific treatments for the disease. Through a collaboration between DNDi and the Serum Institute of India, partners are progressing a promising dengue treatment candidate into a Phase III clinical trial expected to begin in early 2027 in Brazil, Thailand, and Malaysia. The Alliance is also supporting research on additional treatment approaches, including antivirals and host-directed therapies.

Through its expertise in arboviral diseases, clinical research, diagnostics, surveillance, and climate-related health research, KEMRI will contribute to Alliance efforts to strengthen understanding of dengue transmission, improve diagnosis, and support the development of new medicines for affected populations.

ENDS

About KEMRI

The Kenya Medical Research Institute, a State Corporation established pursuant to the Kenya Medical Research Institute Charter as a health research institution with specialized degree awarding status in accordance with section 24(1)(a) of the

Universities Act, whose registered offices are located at KEMRI Headquarters, Off Raila Odinga Way and of P.O. Box 54840 -00200 Nairobi.

About DNDi

The Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) is a not-for-profit medical research organization that discovers, develops, and delivers safe, effective, and affordable treatments for neglected populations. DNDi is developing medicines for sleeping sickness, leishmaniasis, Chagas disease, parasitic worm diseases, mycetoma, dengue, cryptococcal meningitis, hepatitis C, and viruses of pandemic potential. Its research priorities include children's health, gender equity and gender-responsive R&D, and diseases impacted by climate change. Since its creation in 2003, DNDi has collaborated with public and private partners worldwide to deliver 17 new treatments for six deadly diseases, saving millions of lives. dndi.org

Media Contacts

Wodera James (Nairobi)

Mobile +254 722767682

jwodera@kemri.go.ke

Linet Otieno (Nairobi)
Mobile: +254 733 624206
latieno@dndi.org

Frédéric Ojardias (Geneva)
Mobile: +41 79 431 6216
fojardias@dndi.org