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PRESS RELEASE

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Data is crucial in accelerating Nigeria towards HIV epidemic control - U.S. Ambassador

The U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, Mary Beth Leonard, described data repository programs such as the U.S.-supported National Data Repository (NDR) platform as a crucial component in accelerating access to life-saving anti-retroviral treatment to people living with HIV. The platform provides near real-time data to allocate resources, recognize successes, and identify areas needed for new strategies.

She stated this at the Strengthening HIV Field Epidemiology, Infectious Disease Surveillance, and Laboratory Diagnostics project (SHIELD) closeout ceremony, which was funded by the United States government through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and implemented by the University of Maryland at Baltimore (UMB) Nigeria with technical support from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The Ambassador described the successful completion of the project as an essential milestone in the U.S. government's collaboration with the Government of Nigeria in HIV epidemic control efforts. "Over the past two years, it has been a great source of pride for me to witness the successful partnership between our governments on the national HIV response." She attributed this success to the collective contributions and achievements of implementing partners and programs such as SHIELD. Overall, the US assistance supported more than 90 percent (1,649,188) of the estimated 1.8 million adults in Nigeria infected with HIV receiving treatment and propels the country to a point where HIV epidemic control is within reach.

The SHIELD project also helped closely monitor the effects of COVID-19 on the HIV response and effectively mitigated its negative impact. In addition, data from the NDR has been used to develop guiding policies regarding viral suppression, recency surveillance, and mortality surveillance, which are vital to long-term sustained epidemic control.

The US-CDC awarded the SHIELD project in October 2016 to improve the quality of HIV service delivery by instituting standardized monitoring and evaluation nationally. The project aligns with the PEPFAR 2025 strategy that highlights the need to institutionalize robust, granular, and transparent partner country data systems to manage and monitor the HIV response, disease detection broadly, and outbreak control. The same practices are being adapted for the needs of Nigeria beyond the HIV response to COVID-19 and other disease outbreaks.

The highlight of the closeout ceremony included the launching of products from the SHIELD Project, including the Electronic Medical Records Implementation Guideline, Case-Based Surveillance Guideline & Road Map, NDR Platform, NDR Analytic Database, National Medical Record System (NMRS) Website, and the NAIIS NADA sub-domain.

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ABOUT CDC Nigeria: *CDC Nigeria is the country office of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), with a vision of public health excellence for healthy Nigerians. The office supports the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH), its department, agencies, and states ministries of health, and several key partners in developing, implementing, and evaluating disease response efforts and programs that contribute to more robust public health infrastructure in Nigeria. More information about CDC and its programs.*