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PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. and Nigerian Militaries Celebrate 15 years of Successful Partnership on Health

Abuja, March 3, 2020 – The U.S. Department of Defense’s Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) and the Nigerian Ministry of Defence (NMOD) Health Implementation Program (MODHIP) celebrate 15 years of successful partnership in 2020. The partnership is dedicated to Nigerian military health and increasing knowledge that impacts global health outcomes.

The week-long program started with an opening ceremony at the New Chelsea Hotel, Abuja, attended by leaders from the U.S. Military, U.S. Embassy and Nigerian Military and government officials. At a gala night, awards were presented for significant contributions to the partnership, longevity in service, and excellence in performance in the provision of healthcare services.

In her remarks U.S. Chargé d’Affaires, Kathleen FitzGibbon noted that disease knows no boundaries, and does not care whether the infected is military or civilian, and it is only by working together that it can be overcome. She stated that “While fifteen years is a significant amount of time, this program has grown very quickly – from just a handful of sites supported in HIV prevention, care, and treatment, to a national footprint with some of the best quality healthcare to Nigerians, strong laboratory capability, and growing strength in addressing emerging infectious diseases and biosecurity.”

The NMOD and WRAIR partnership started in 2005 in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Nigeria, to deliver comprehensive HIV prevention, care, and treatment within the military community. The partnership, having grown from four military facilities to 40 sites across the country, now not only maintains HIV-related healthcare, but also strengthens the response to other infectious diseases within and outside Nigeria.

This partnership maintains more than 33,000 clients on HIV anti-retroviral therapy. It has completed four research protocols, including two Phase II Ebola vaccine trials - the first of their kind in Nigeria, and is currently enrolling patients in two additional clinical studies. In 2015, the partners added their expertise to the Joint West Africa Research Group, a collaboration driven by the West Africa Ebola outbreak with the aim of enhancing the personnel and technological capacity to prepare for, detect, and respond to future outbreaks of infectious diseases.

Looking forward, the partnership will continue to support HIV services, malaria diagnostics, infectious disease research, and biosecurity, and is exploring options to expand programmatic implementation to other diseases of military relevance.

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