

BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING NATIONAL MEDICINES REGULATORY AUTHORITIES: GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES IN MEDICINE SAFETY SURVEILLANCE FOR THE HEALTH WORKFORCE

The African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) on the 9th of September, 2025, hosted a capacity-building workshop for pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists in Zambia, focusing on strengthening medicine safety surveillance and enhancing regulatory capacity across Africa.

The workshop was held on the sidelines of the first-ever Industrial Skills Week for Africa (ISWA-2025), a conference which was organized by AUDA-NEPAD in collaboration with the Zambian Ministry of Technology and Science, private sector organizations, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and other strategic partners.

Moderated by Mr. Makomani Siyanga, Director-General of the Zambia Medicines Regulatory Authority (ZAMRA), the workshop highlighted the African Union Smart Safety Surveillance (AU-3S) initiative, which supports African National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) in building robust medicine safety surveillance systems.



Mr. Kenneth Onu, AUDA-NEPAD's Head of the AU-3S programme, highlighted how the AU-3S platform was leveraged during the COVID-19 pandemic to monitor vaccine rollouts across Africa.

He noted that this approach was crucial due to Africa's fragile healthcare systems, the emergency use authorizations granted by the World Health Organization (WHO) for COVID-19 vaccines, and the need for reliance mechanisms to guide regulatory decisions.



Participants explored a range of critical themes designed to strengthen regulatory capacity and improve health outcomes:

1. The role of pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists in healthcare delivery.
2. An overview of the AU-3S programme and its solutions following the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.
3. Signal management approaches by the Joint Signal Management (JSM) Group.
4. Safety recommendations and decision-making strategies by African Union Member States.

In addition, Mr. José António Goncalves presented insights on biomedical equipment repair and maintenance as well as the integration of renewable energy solutions.



He underscored the importance of devices designed to interact with biological systems, supporting healthcare professionals in delivering accurate and effective care.

ISWA-2025, which took place from the 9th to the 10th of September 2025, in Lusaka, provided a platform for cross-sector collaboration, skills development, and knowledge exchange, emphasizing the importance of capacity-building initiatives to advance medicine regulation and patient safety across Africa.

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