

JICA'S SUPPORT IN ZAMBIAN RESEARCH AND SURVEILLANCE CAPACITY

The Scientific Meeting on Viral Zoonosis at University of Zambia (SATREPS Project)

On Friday, 8th December, 2017; Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Ministry of Higher Education in conjunction with the Ministry of Health will host a Scientific Meeting to present an overview of the project activities and research results as part of the terminal evaluation of the project. The meeting will be held at the University of Zambia, School of Veterinary Studies; consisting of Zambian researchers, their Japanese counterparts and representation from the education and health sectors.

The School of Veterinary Medicine, at the University of Zambia has been carrying out "the project for Surveillance of Viral Zoonoses in Africa" since June 2013 under the scheme of Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable (SATREPS) with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to strengthen research and surveillance capacity.

Recently, emerging and reemerging infectious diseases are appearing worldwide, and are becoming of major concern to public health. Most of these diseases are zoonoses whose causative agents infect both humans and animals. Zoonoses are one of the highest priority issues for public health in Zambia and Southern African countries.

This Project has completed setting up the experimental facilities which today include the Biosafety Level 2 and 3 Laboratory, Virology laboratory and animal facility. As a response to the Ebola hemorrhagic fever outbreak in 2014, the School of Veterinary Medicine was designated as the only laboratory to provide Ebola diagnostic service in Zambia.

The project have successfully detected filovirus- and bunya virus-specific antibodies in the serum samples collected from wild and/or domestic animals, and these serological surveillance

have continued. They also continued field activities to discover novel viruses from animals and arthropods. Zambia has strengthened its research and diagnostic capacity on viral diseases and has been able to demonstrate leadership in the management of zoonoses in sub-Saharan Africa.

JICA is a bilateral organization supplementing Government efforts in enhancing development in various sectors that include; Infrastructure development, Health, Education, Agriculture, Water and the Private Sector. JICA also provides training opportunities in Japan as part of improving human resource skills.