

Increasing Access to Quality Commodities in Developing Countries:

Harmonizing Condom Quality Assurance through Advocacy in East, Southern and the Horn of Africa through Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

Presented at the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition 15th General Membership Meeting

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UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office

Proposed Outline



1. Background and Rationale

- Need for region-wide coordination, harmonisation and standardisation of condom quality assurance
- Formation of a region-wide technical working group
- Development of a Position Paper on Post-Shipment testing of condoms
- Formulation of Terms of Reference for the TWG

2. Modus Operandi of the TWG

- Membership (voting and non-voting members)
- UNFPA's role

3. Recent achievements

- Overcoming recurrent QA issues anchored in national policies through regional advocacy led by a REC

4. Perspectives and long term positioning

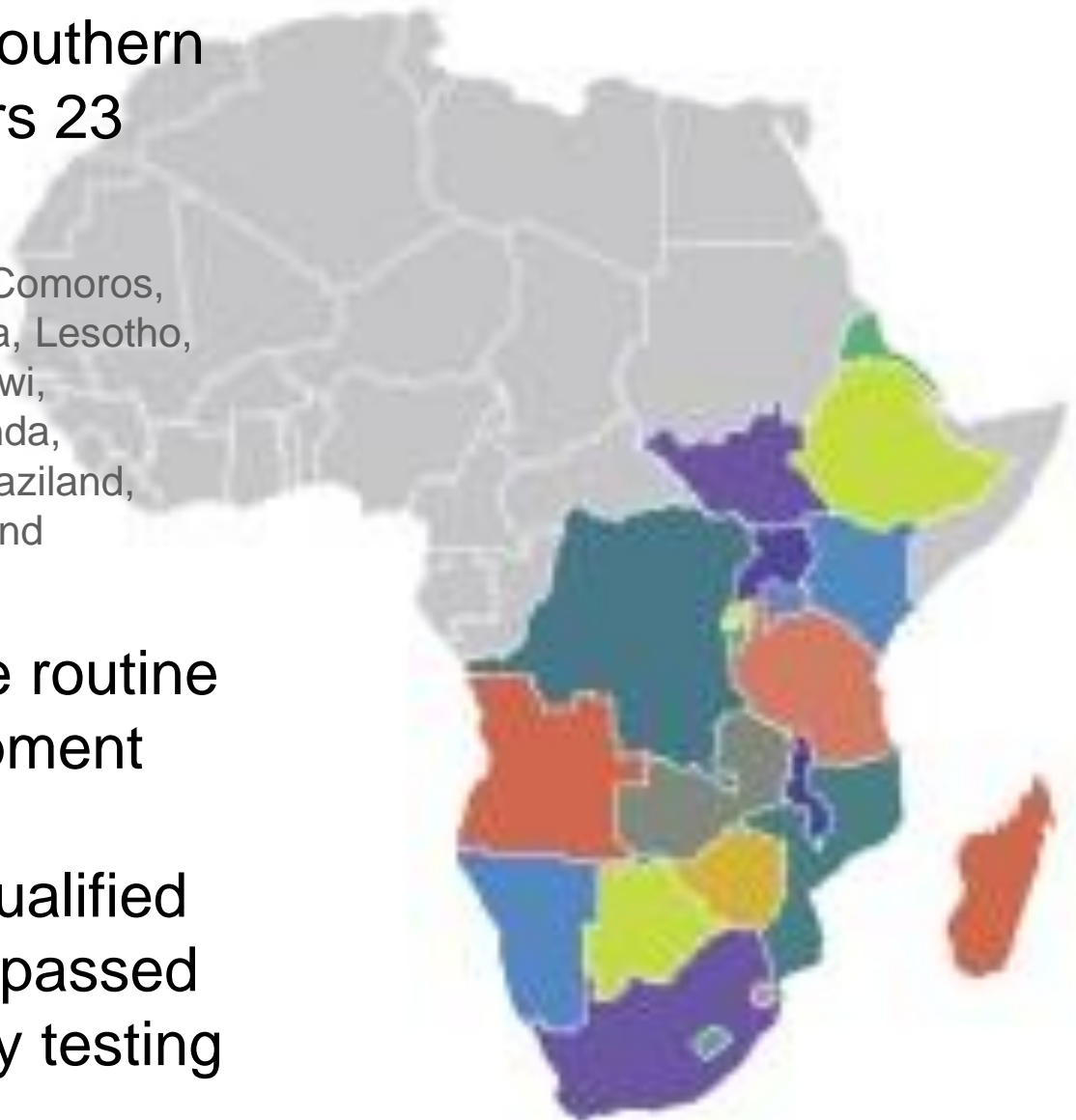
- Regional Center of Excellence on Supply Chain Management
- Investigating capacity of a regional manufacturing of condoms
- Strengthening capacity of regional QA testing labs

Background and Rationale 1/2

- UNFPA East and Southern Africa Region covers 23 countries

Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe

- Of these, 13 require routine in-country post-shipment testing of condoms procured from prequalified manufacturers and passed pre-shipment quality testing



Background and Rationale 2/2

- This contravenes WHO and UNFPA recommendations (tests often carried out in unaccredited labs, result in falsely failed condoms, create artificial shortages and subsequent crisis of confidence in the quality of condoms)
- Other challenges: countries using various quality standards and ad-hoc systems



Formation of the region-wide Technical Working Group (1/2)



- In order to provide region-wide coordination, harmonisation and standardisation of condom quality assurance, it was necessary to involve the Regional Economic Communities (such as COMESA, EAC, IGAD and SADC)



Formation of the region-wide Technical Working Group (2/2)



- A Position Paper on Post-Shipment testing of condoms was agreed in August 2012, and resulted in the formation of a region-wide technical working group with the following objectives (to start initially with condoms):
 - To facilitate increased and sustainable access to quality reproductive health commodities for Family Planning, HIV and Safe motherhood in East, Southern and Horn of Africa (ESHA);
 - To facilitate sustainable availability of RH Commodities (RHCs) in ESHA;
 - To promote generation and dissemination of knowledge for advocacy and evidence based decision making in ESHA;
- The TWG was chaired by IGAD until Aug 2014 with EAC as Rapporteur. For 2014/15, roles swapped: chaired by EAC, IGAD as Rapporteur , and UNFPA provides the technical secretariat.

Operationalising the ESHA RHCS TWG



- The ESHA RHCS TWG aims to
 - support coordination of condom logistics,
 - promote acceptance and use also conduct advocacy for adequate supplies of male and female condoms, personal lubricants and other commodities in ESHA region.
- Meetings: Kenya (2012), Johannesburg (2013)
- South Africa RECs meeting with UNFPA country offices and regulatory authorities to generate consensus on post-shipment testing of condoms
- Addis Ababa workshop of August 2014, to discuss RHCS and QA to draw a way forward in operationalisation of the work plan of the 1st ESHA RH TWG plan.
- To implement these plans RECs will work with relevant departments/ministries from the member states to design and establish RHCS and QA systems in the region.

Modus Operandi of the TWG



- Membership (voting and non-voting members)
 - African Union commission
 - RECs – COMESA, EAC, IGAD, SADC

- Partners (Regional Offices)
 - WHO
 - PSI
 - IPPF

- UNFPA's role (ESARO and HQ/PSB)
 - Technical guidance and Secretariat

2014 ESHA TWG – 14 August 2014 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



- Overcoming QA issues
 - Of the 13 countries mentioned above, most have complied with ESARO's plan for QA enhancement (resolved by post shipment position paper)
 - QA assessment and capacity building of labs (Botswana, Kenya, Zambia in 2013)
 - Country involvement in pre-qualification inspections of manufacturers – Kenya and Uganda (2013), Zambia (2014)
 - Local condom manufacturer of condoms, assessment process on going
- Regional Team of Inspectors led by EAC
 - approved in recent EAC-TWG
 - To be endorsed by upcoming council of Minister and implemented

Perspectives and long term positioning



- Advocacy and Policy Dialogue: EALA communique:
 - Zero-rating customs for RHCs imports
 - Establishing/increasing national RHC budgets
- Regional SCM Centre of Excellence
 - to address challenges of vaccines and other lifesaving health commodities supply management by addressing weaknesses in human resource capacity
 - ESARO provides technical leadership and capacity building for curricula
- Investigating capacity for regional manufacturing of condoms
- Strengthening capacity of regional QA testing labs
 - SA in 2014
 - Uganda pending

RECs to lead the QA agenda in Africa

- Member states' to be accountable through RECs in the context of the Post 2015 development agenda
- UNFPA's strategy: strive to expand access to good-quality sexual and reproductive health services, especially for disadvantaged populations, to dramatically reduce inequalities and advance inclusive social development

**THANK
YOU**

