

KANCO Hosts the Regional Oversight Committee

By: KANCO Writer



KANCO with support of the Global Fund to fight HIV, Malaria and TB-GFATM, organized the second regional oversight committee-ROC for the regional HIV and Harm Reduction Project in Nairobi. The two day meeting brought together country

representatives of the GFATM Country Coordinating Mechanisms- CCM's, Representatives from the East African Community-EAC regional and Global players in Harm Reduction OSIEA , UNODC and representatives for the regional Network of People who Use Drugs (EAHRN) to discuss the regional grant issues.

The meeting is part of the process of fostering a harm reduction movement for

the region. The main focus of the meeting was to share the regional project progress updates including, in-country harm reduction updates as well as plan for the next phase of implementation.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to share on the progress of development of the regional harm reduction policy. The policy aims to provide a platform for countries in East Africa to adopt and effectively implement harm reduction strategies based in their contexts. It also seeks to address the punitive legal environment around drug use in the region by providing a legal frameworks within which harm reduction in the region is addressed.

Sharing on the policy updates, the East African Community Secretariat coordinator, EAC Integrated Health Programmes Dr. Michael Katende said that the committee is mandated to give oversight to the project by ensuring proper planning, accountability and reporting. He further said that the regional policy was on tract with most of the countries validation meetings having taken place. The

countries that had not had validation Dr. Katende added still had a chance to interrogate and share their feedback on the policy adding that it is critical in the next steps where the countries would need to lobby their representatives in the East African Legislative Assemble for adoption and also for in country implementation if adopted.

“It is important for stakeholders to own this process,”he said and added that the policy is a step in the right direction towards sustainability and cementing of harm reduction in the region.

KANCO, Technical Programmes Director, Onesmus Mlewa, while sharing on the project updates during the meeting said that as players in harm reduction in the region, it is imperative to build an investment case for harm reduction in the region and work towards scaling up interventions.