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Singapore Health Ministry and African CDC partner to tackle Mpox outbreak

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To strengthen the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention's (Africa CDC) capacity for enhanced mpox case management, the Ministry of Health, Singapore will provide a support package consisting of mpox diagnostic kits and testing supplies, enabling up to 50,000 tests.

The ongoing mpox outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of Continental Security (PHECS) by Africa CDC on August 13, 2024. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on August 14, 2024, due to its global spread.

As of November 2024, the outbreak has affected 19 African Union member states. There are over 12,000 confirmed cases since the start of the year. This increase is primarily driven by outbreaks in the member states, particularly the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Burundi.

One of the significant challenges in controlling the mpox outbreak in Africa has been the shortage of essential testing supplies. This has hindered efforts to expand lab testing, detect cases, and trace contacts. These are vital for effective case management and tracing to strengthen public health measures. In response, Africa CDC and WHO have initiated a joint continental plan prioritising the expansion of mpox testing.

The laboratory testing strategy includes: scaling up mpox testing capacity by supporting centralised Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) sites, activating additional testing sites, deploying near point-of-care testing, training laboratory personnel, and providing adequate testing supplies.