SEND GHANA STATEMENT ON THE MONKEYPOX DISEASE OUTBREAK IN GHANA

SEND GHANA has taken notice of reports of recently confirmed cases of the Monkeypox virus in Ghana. According to the Director-General of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), five cases of the infectious disease have been recorded in Ghana’s Eastern, western, and Greater Accra regions.

It is distressing that this is occurring at a time there is a surge in COVID-19 cases and the Influenza A H3N2, with the first case of the latter recorded in January 2022. This development suggests that Ghana is currently dealing with three health emergencies in the face of the prevailing economic challenges.

SEND GHANA wishes to commend the GHS for taking proactive steps to increase surveillance and cautioning the Ghanaian citizenry to be on a high alert even before the disease spreads across the country. Noting that some control measures are already in place to minimize the spread of the disease after it has been confirmed is a step in the right direction.

While SEND GHANA applauds the GHS, we deem it extremely necessary to reinforce our call for the government of Ghana and health policymakers to increase funding for epidemic preparedness. In emergencies such as this, reliable and adequate funding is essential to, for example, increase human resource capacity, create and sustain public awareness, strengthen surveillance and response systems to help prevent disease outbreaks, and ensure rapid response at the local level, etc.

We maintain that future epidemics are inevitable. Therefore, it is necessary to make a long-term investment in health security systems and preparedness to deal effectively with public health emergencies. Responding too late to disease outbreaks costs lives and affects economic growth, national security, and the well-being of people. In developing economies such as Ghana, the poorest and most vulnerable people are the most affected by health threats.

We strongly urge the government to speed up efforts to set up the Public Health Emergency Fund and/or realign the existing COVID-19 Levy to include epidemic prevention and response at all levels. A Public Health Emergency Fund would be critical in helping increase resilience in Ghana’s health system to prepare and respond with urgency to existing public health risks and future epidemics.

Signed

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Vision: A Ghana where people’s rights and well being are guaranteed.
The Mission of SEND is to promote good governance and the equality of women and men in Ghana.