

Headline	`Open medical hubs in Africa`		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	12 Sep 2017	Color	Full Color
Section	World	Circulation	338,368
Page No	23	Readership	1,032,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	179 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 9,008
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 27,024



CHINA

'Open medical hubs in Africa'

UN: Region needs more HIV drugs

BEIJING: The head of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS has called on China to boost prevention and control in Africa by encouraging the country's drugmakers to open production hubs on the continent.

Michel Sidibe, executive director of UNAIDS, said the central government should use the China-Africa Development Fund to mobilise key pharmaceutical companies to invest in manufacturing hubs covering many African countries, which will help create a "viable and sustainable" market.

At the same time, medicines for HIV and AIDS produced in China and used by Chinese should be pre-qualified by the World Health Organization for use in Africa, he added.

"We need to create a policy space to make sure those products can be pre-qualified by the WHO.

"That is one of the major challenges for the African countries to have easy access to these medicines," said Sidibe, who also is under-secretary-general of the United Nations.

Shortages of drugs and grass-roots healthcare workers pose a major challenge for the control and prevention of HIV/AIDS in Africa, he said, while China also has experience and knowledge in the field that can be passed on.

"We are happy that we have a very good relationship with the Chinese; 97% of the medicine consumed in Africa is from other continents," Sidibe said.

President Xi Jinping proposed intensifying cooperation with Africa in a number of areas, including industrial development, agriculture, finance, poverty alleviation and healthcare, at the 2015 summit of the Forum of China-Africa Cooperation in South Africa.

According to a 10-point action plan, Beijing will encourage Chinese enterprises to collaborate with Africa on drug research, development and production, and encourage them to produce drugs in Africa to aid the sustainable development of the local pharmaceutical industry. — China Daily/Asia News Network