



PRESS RELEASE

Eduardo Mondlane Center of Biotechnology now in the first line for covid-19 diagnosis together with the National Health Institute

Maputo, 20th of May 2020 – While the number of coronavirus cases appears to grow faster, worrying the health authorities that alert on a possible phase of “community transmission” of the virus, Mozambique moves forward with the decentralization of tests for covid-19.

The E. Mondlane Center of Biotechnology (CB – UEM) has been recently accredited by the National Health Institute (INS) of the Ministry of Health to conduct the tests for covid-19: the INS trained two laboratory technicians, and certified that CB - UEM owns the necessary equipment to develop the diagnosis. Since last week, the Center is carrying out about 150 tests per day, alleviating the pressure on the INS that was, until some days ago, was the sole structure in the whole country to conduct covid-19 tests. The two laboratories together now have a capacity of conducting 1,000 tests per day.

Moreover, on May 19th some researchers of the Center answered the call promoted by the Fundo Nacional de Investigação of the Ministry of Science and Technology, and presented two research projects for the control of the virus in Mozambique. Both studies have a strong concrete application to control the epidemic in the country: the first is a molecular genetic study for the genotyping of the virus, while the second is an epidemiological study to test the presence of antibodies to covid-19 in Maputo hospitals' health workers.

The Center of Biotechnology is a historic partner in the field of university cooperation pursued by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) in Mozambique. Since 2010, AICS has invested around 2,9 million Euros for the Center's renovation and valorization, also through the presence and expertise of top Italian universities in the field of Biotechnology such as the University of Sassari and the University of Roma “La Sapienza”. Over 10 years of collaboration has led to a complete renovation of the Center's infrastructures and equipments, as well as the activation of a Master's course in Biotechnology for Mozambican graduates. The Center is composed of three departments (diagnostics and molecular epidemiology, genetic characterization of populations, environmental studies) and is nowadays considered a national point of reference for analysis processes applied to the control of communicable diseases, the control of food quality and for the studies on human, animal and plant health.

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