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## **ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL MEDICINES IS FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT**

Access to essential medicines is a fundamental human right recognized by governments around the world, said Masautso Phiri acting MeTA Zambia coordinator.

Speaking when he introduced MeTA Zambia to CSOs at a workshop at Mwaaka Lodge in Solwezi said essential medicines were a global necessity for all countries including Zambia and whether rich or poor medicines were important for the health citizens of all countries.

“Many people in Zambia are unable to access essential medicines to save or improve their lives,” he noted.

He said MeTA is a multistakeholder forum representing Government, CSOs and the private sector of which a pilot phase was undertaken from 2008 to 2010 in seven countries including Zambia.

“Other partners include WHO, the World Bank, governments, global and national CSOs, pharmaceutical and other business interests,” he said.

He also said that MeTA as a multistakeholder alliance of partners is working to improve access to medicines by increasing transparency and accountability in the healthcare marketplace especially the procurement of medicines.

“The UK Department for International Development (DFID) provided funding for the pilot phase and is now providing funding for an initial 4 years after the pilot project ended in 2010 in 7 countries,” he said, adding: “Under phase two MeTA Zambia is including among CSOs political parties and religious organizations.”

Further the message from MeTA Zambia is that people should get involved in their own health. They should demand quality affordable medicines to improve their lives.

“In Zambia many people do not have regular and affordable access to essential medicines. This is why we are here and why we are talking to you,” he challenged.



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