

NAFDAC DG DECLARES OPEN 3RD NIGERIA PHARMA MANUFACTURERS AND LAB EXPO

Under the theme: 'The Nigerian Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Industry and International Competitiveness,' the 3rd Nigeria Pharma Manufacturers and Lab Expo was declared opening on Monday morning by the Director General of the National Agency for Food, Drugs Administration And Control, NAFDAC, Dr. Paul Orhi at the The Haven event centre in GRA Ikeja, Lagos.

The three-day affair, which runs until September 9 is being staged for stakeholders in the health sector to exchange information, products, services and ideas.

The expo is a joint venture of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Group of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, PMGMAN, and GPE Expo Pvt Limited, and this year's event is attracting over 130 exhibitors and about 2,500 participants.

In the keynote address to open the expo, the chairman of PMGMAN, Mr. Okey Akpa highlighted the achievements recorded by the Nigerian pharmaceutical companies, which he said included the manufacturing of drugs for neglected tropical diseases.

"The Nigerian pharmaceutical industry has paid adequate attention to the manufacturing of drugs for diseases prevailing in Africa, which international companies are not interested in, such as anti-malaria, sickle cell disease medicines," adding that over \$50m has been invested by Nigerian pharmaceutical companies in the industry in the last five years.

According to him, "Nigeria is currently the biggest pharmaceutical manufacturing country in West Africa. It accounts for more than 65 per cent of the local manufacture of medicines relevant to the people and diseases of our nation and region. They are anti-malaria medicines, anti-retroviral medicines for HIV/AIDS, herbal medicines and medicines for sickle cell diseases and many others.

"Manufacturers processing WHO pre-qualification have invested over 50 million dollars in the last five years."

He however said the newly introduced Common External Tariffs (CET) in West Africa cast a shadow on the industry in Nigeria.

"ECOWAS External Tariffs (CET) is the single factor threatening the industry today. Before its introduction finished pharmaceutical products under the Import HS codes, 3003 and 3004 attracted up to 20% duty. But CET does not allow this. Rather, it attracts zero percent on finished products into countries.

"It is individual countries that are allowed to use protection tax on products which it has capacity for and that is what we are asking for in the industry," the PMGMAN chairman, Mr. Okey Akpa explained in his keynote address to open the 3rd Nigeria Pharma Manufacturers and Lab Expo.