

Over 45 officials from different government institutions, on Wednesday November 23, completed a public health protection course on food safety and drug quality.

Participants in the eight-day training were facilitated by experts from the health protection department of the Carabinieri, the Italian Police, including Police officers, investigators, those from the ministries of Health, Justice, Agriculture, Trade and Industry.

Others are from Rwanda Forensic Laboratory (RFL), Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority (FDA), Rwanda Standards Board (RSB) and Rwanda Inspectorate, Competition and Consumer Protection Authority (RICA).

During the eight days, participants covered key aspects of public health protection such as food safety and hygiene inspections, counterfeit pharmaceuticals; tools for inspection (checklists) of food and pharmacies; and anti-doping.

Functionality of pharmaceutical Security Initiative (PSI) in tracking counterfeit medicines as well as laws and policies also formed part of the training.

The training also included among others field visits to pharmaceutical and food premises such as shops and restaurants.

Commissioner of Police (CP) Vianney Nshimiyimana, the Commissioner for Cooperation and Protocol at Rwanda National Police (RNP), while closing the training, congratulated the participants for the successful completion of the course.

“This public health protection course seeks to equip the participants with the necessary knowledge, technique and skills to analyze the standards, conformity assessment and sharing information on counterfeiting of pharmaceuticals and consumer products,” CP Nshimiyimana said.

He observed that Rwanda’s ambition is to be a service hub and that public health protection is fundamental to this course.

“No one would wish to be where his or her health is not well protected. The knowledge and skills you have acquired should help you to fulfill your tasks.. to ensure the good health of people living in Rwanda.”

Col. Francesco Sessa, the Carabinieri Liaison Officer in Rwanda, also lauded the good cooperation between RNP and Carabinieri especially in capacity development.

He challenged the trainees to be catalysts in consumer protection and public health.