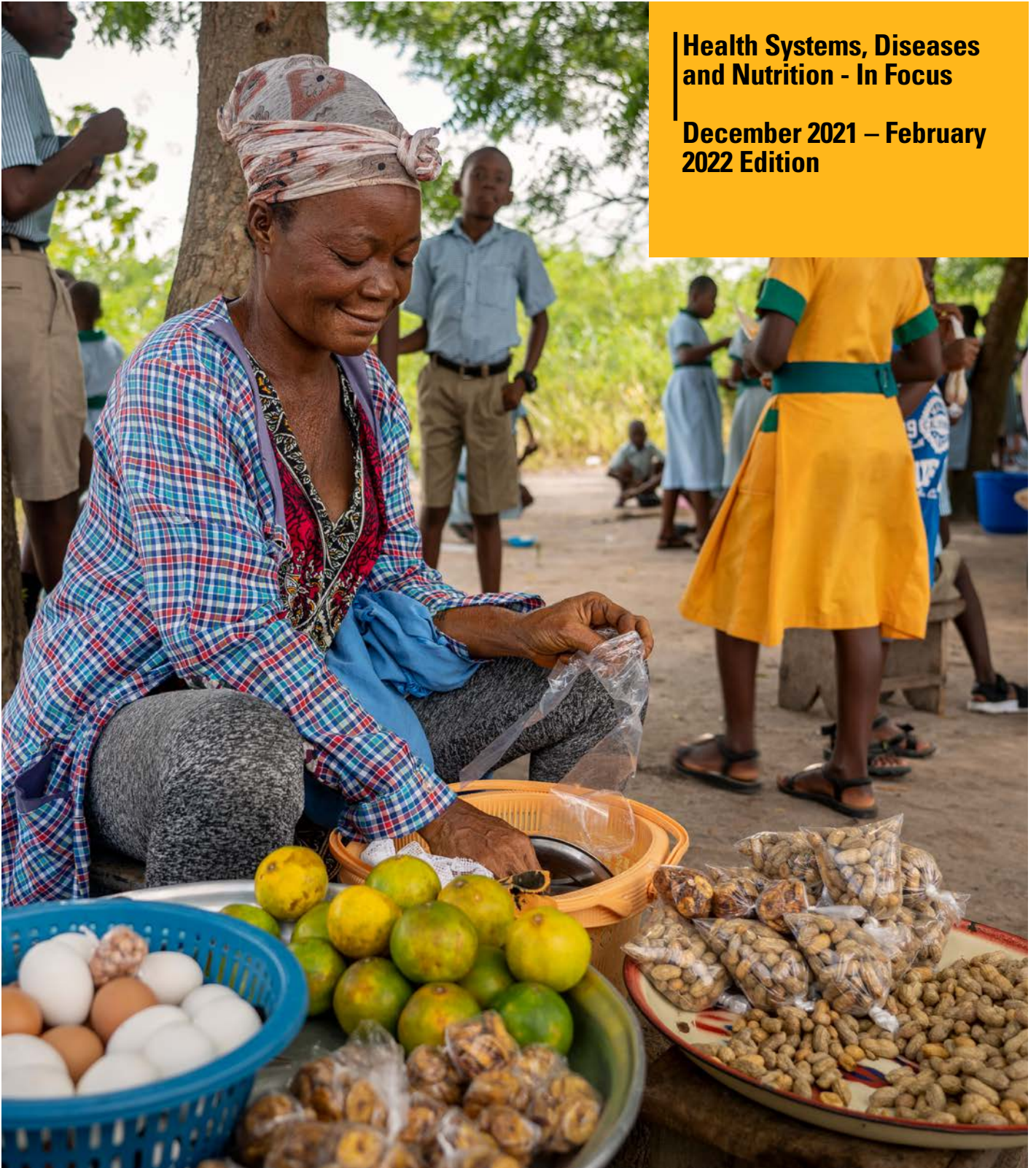




Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS)

Newsletter



**Health Systems, Diseases
and Nutrition - In Focus**

**December 2021 – February
2022 Edition**

THE AFRICAN UNION ENDORSES 2022 AS THE YEAR OF NUTRITION



Aspiration one (1) of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 envisions a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development with goal three (3) highlighting the importance of healthy and well-nourished citizens. Agenda 2063 further recognizes human capital development as a critical means to deliver the vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent and therefore investments in Africa's people is fundamental.

Human capital is key for development as it leads to improved lives for individuals, higher earnings and improved incomes for countries. Under this backdrop, H.E. President Alassane Ouattara, the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, (EX.CL/1266(XXXVIII)) submitted a proposal to have the African Union (AU) theme for the Year 2022 dedicated to strengthening the fight against malnutrition in all its forms.

The proposed theme was launched by the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of the Union in February 2022 by the title "Strengthening Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on the African Continent: Strengthening Agri-Food Systems, Health and Social Protection Systems for Acceleration of Human, Social and Economic Capital Development."

The theme aims to celebrate nutrition gains in recent years and sets the continent on the right track for maintaining a strong political momentum on nutrition. The year 2022 further provides an opportunity to strengthen, continental, regional and national commitments to end malnutrition in all its forms given: the increase in morbidity and mortality related to malnutrition and the associated socio-economic impacts. Endorsing the theme of the year, the Heads of States and Government reaffirmed the continued importance of nutrition especially

child nutrition as a major pillar in human capital development, social and economic transformation of Africa and called on all member states to continue prioritizing nutrition through the implementation of the priorities outlined in 2022-year action plan.

**"STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE IN
NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY
ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT:
STRENGTHENING AGRI-FOOD
SYSTEMS, HEALTH AND SOCIAL
PROTECTION SYSTEMS FOR
ACCELERATION OF HUMAN,
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CAPITAL
DEVELOPMENT"**

Cont'd from page 2

With the increased efforts and commitment to prioritise and invest in nutrition at the continental and national level, Africa's share in the world's undernourished population decreased from 35.5 percent in 1990 to 22 percent in 2019. Despite these gains, efforts to improve food security and nutrition in the continent need to be intensified as most African Member States are unlikely to reach the Malabo declaration by 2025 of reducing stunting to 10% and Underweight to 5%.

The theme further recognizes the multisectoral nature of addressing malnutrition. The root causes of malnutrition are complex as Africa continues to experience the negative effects of climate change and environmental challenges including recurrent episodes of drought and floods, pest and disease outbreaks, conflicts, natural disasters, insufficient food production, trade restrictions, and unsatisfactory involvement of women and youth in agriculture.

In a bid to achieve the goals of the 2022 theme of nutrition, the Commission and other stakeholders aim to strengthen data management and information systems, knowledge generation and dissemination to inform decision making. Advocacy efforts will be leveled up to increase commitment and nutrition Investment. Additionally, in promoting coherent and harmonized action and transparency for partnerships and mutual accountability discussions with various stakeholders will be organized.

The Commission also plans to put mechanisms of enhancing institutional capacity and enabling environment for nutrition, for intensified action and delivery of results and impact.

As provided on the African Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS), the Commission calls on all AU Member States to put together multi-sectoral nutrition action plans, budgets and expenditure tracking systems for effective implementation and monitoring of nutrition interventions.

The exceptional leadership of His Majesty King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho, and AU Champion for nutrition has kept nutrition high on the policy agenda of member states. The African Union in this regard has endorsed the extension of His mandate for another term (2022-2024), to lead in the implementation of the AU theme of the year.

In 2020, H.E. King Letsie III called on leaders to embed nutrition within the COVID-19 response and recovery. The continent is encouraged to address the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on food security and nutrition.

The Mid-year implementation report on the theme of the year will be presented at the fourth (4th) Mid-year coordination meeting of AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Lusaka, Zambia scheduled for July 2022.

AFRICAN UNION 2021 MALARIA PROGRESS REPORT RELEASED



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His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta, Chair of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA), and Sunday announced the progress of responding to malaria on the continent amidst the COVID-19 public health emergency. The fourth annual Africa Malaria Progress Report highlights the achievements, challenges, and future directions in responding to the disease and the broader health and development agenda. It also outlines the progress in the 25 AU Member States engaging communities and leaders to take personal responsibility to end malaria through the Zero Malaria Starts with Me Campaign, co-led by the African Union and Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership to End Malaria.

Over the last two years, H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta implemented an ambitious four-point agenda that includes digitalisation with an emphasis on the use of country scorecards for accountability and action, the establishment of End Malaria Councils and Funds for increased multisectoral action, high-level advocacy and domestic resource mobilisation including from the private sector, increased engagement with Regional Economic Communities and harnessing the demographic dividend of the youthful population through a malaria youth army.

The report provides critical updates on the Regional Malaria Youth Strategy, which provides a framework for engaging youth leaders across Africa to act against malaria. It also looks into the role and expounds on the continent-wide ALMA Youth Advisory Council (AYAC) activities established to guide mobilising youth and engaging and sensitising existing youth structures to join the fight against malaria.

The African Union 2021 Malaria Progress Report is available for download on www.aidswatchafrica.net/newsroom

A LOOK BACK AT AFRICAN UNION NUTRITION CHAMPION CALL ON LEADERS TO EMBED NUTRITION WITHIN THE COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY IN 2020



His Majesty King Letsie III Head of State of the Kingdom of Lesotho, African Union Nutrition Champion and also a champion of African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN)

His Majesty King Letsie III Head of State of the Kingdom of Lesotho, African Union Nutrition Champion and also a champion of African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN), issued a position paper titled, "Embedding Nutrition within the COVID-19 Response and Recovery" in 2020. The position paper which was sent to all the African Union Member States called on all Heads of State and Governments to ensure the incorporation and promotion of nutrition smart interventions within COVID-19 response and recovery action plans.

The paper recommends that countries maintain and increase the level of funding allocated to nutrition to safeguard previous efforts to address malnutrition and ensure there are no gaps within their multi-year nutrition programmes in immediate, medium-term and post-pandemic recovery COVID-19 response plans. To effectively embed nutrition in the COVID-19 response and strategies calls for the prioritizing of nutrition in the national health sector, food systems and social net response interventions.

The paper further highlights the role of high-level political leadership, in particular Heads of State and Government and Ministers of Finance, as Nutrition Champions. These efforts coupled with a robust nutrition

strategy will galvanize action into proper nutrition for children through the availability of nutritious foods for all. Proper nutrition is a vital component of the general health for both children and adults. Undernutrition compromises immune systems, making bodies vulnerable to infection, reducing the effectiveness of vaccines, and impeding recovery. Consequently, stunting among children, low birthweight and wasting are existing challenges that have been affecting children in Africa leading to decreased productivity in adulthood.

The pandemic has created major global health and economic shocks, with unprecedented impacts on people's health, nutrition and livelihoods. As a result, Africa is experiencing negative economic growth, primarily as a result of the sharp decline in productivity, jobs and revenues. At the same time, recent data shows that Africa has the highest prevalence of malnutrition and may soon overtake Asia as the region with the fastest-growing number of hungry and undernourished people. Therefore, nutrition cannot be left behind in the COVID-19 response in Africa.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a chance for Africa's leaders to reshape and spearhead high-level sensitization, advocacy and resource mobilization efforts towards securing increased investments in nutrition.

About the African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN)

The African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN) is an initiative by the African Development Bank and the African Union Commission which was endorsed by the Assembly of Heads of State and Governments of the African Union (AU) in 2018 (Assembly/AU/Dec.681(XXX)). The ALN Initiative was established to rally high-level political engagement to advance nutrition in Africa. It is led by a group of ALN Champions, comprising current and former Heads of State and Government, Finance Ministers and eminent leaders with the power to catalyze and sustain high-level political leadership and commitment to increase financial resources to end malnutrition in Africa.

Download the position paper here : <https://au.int/en/documents/20200909/aln-initiative-embedding-nutrition-within-covid-19-response-and-recovery>

NUTRITION RESPONSE IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT. WHAT STEPS IS THE AFRICAN UNION TAKING?



The African continent continues to face a myriad of humanitarian challenges that are instigated by both natural and human activities. Conflicts and climate change have led to mass displacements of persons within and across national borders contributing to the increase in humanitarian needs such as food, water, shelter and sanitation among others. This has exacerbated the dire situation that several vulnerable communities are already facing, with women and children being the most affected.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Global Humanitarian overview, humanitarian needs are growing fast in Africa, more than 113 million people in 15 of the most affected African countries require urgent assistance in 2022. Impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have further increased the humanitarian needs as millions of livelihoods remain at risk.

Humanitarian crises and nutrition are intertwined. Humanitarian crisis challenges such as limited access due to insecurity, population displacement, deteriorated food security, limited access to portable water, increased morbidity and lack of healthcare services will inevitably have an impact on the nutritional status of the most vulnerable and

threaten their nutritional quality. It is critical to manage nutrition in major emergency settings to prevent malnutrition, especially for infants and young children.

The Food Security Information Network (FSNI) global report on food crises 2021 indicated that malnutrition remains a challenge as Africa has some of the highest cases of malnutrition globally accounting for more than nine out of ten of all children with stunting, more than nine out of ten children with wasting, and more than seven out of ten children who are overweight worldwide. The conflict and intercommunal conflict effects in Africa have led to a food and nutrition crisis and the number of people facing a critical lack of food has significantly increased.

African Union Agenda 2063 aspiration one envisions a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. Goal number three (3), five (5) and seven (7) highlight the significance of healthy and well-nourished citizens, modern agriculture for increased proactivity and production of an environmentally sustainable climate, and resilient economies and communities respectively. These goals if achieved will largely address the effects of humanitarian and nutrition challenges.

The African Union Commission is committed to alleviating conflicts that lead to forced displacements. It is under this background that the Commission has organized the 2022 Humanitarian Summit and the Pledging Conference that will deliberate efforts set forth by African Leaders to address the current humanitarian challenges that Africa is facing.

The summit will aim to focus on challenges exacerbated by the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and disasters across the Continent, identify durable and sustainable solutions to address the current issues including those that contribute to post-conflict recovery and peace and development nexus. The summit is scheduled to take place in Equatorial Guinea on 25 – 27 May 2022 under the theme “Humanitarian Financing: Addressing the Current Humanitarian Challenges in Africa.”

During the Summit, several development-related thematic areas are lined up including food security and nutrition situation in Africa. The Summit is very timely, as the AU declared 2022 as the Year of nutrition.

The theme ensures that at continental, regional and national levels there are continued efforts including, advocacy, especially in the regions and communities where risks are most acute, strengthening social protection systems and safeguarding access to food and nutrition for the most vulnerable groups, especially young children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, older people and other at-risk groups.

AFRICAN UNION MEMBER STATES MAKE PROGRESS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRICAN MEDICINES AGENCY



From Left: Mohamed Salem Boukhari Khalil, Office of the Legal Counsel, H.E. Minata Samate Cessouma the Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development at the African Union Commission and Amb. Mohamed Gad, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the African Union

On 31 January 2022, the Arab Republic of Egypt became the nineteenth (19th) African Union (AU) member state to deposit the instrument of ratification of the African Medicines Agency (AMA) at the AU Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Arab Republic of Egypt ratified the Treaty on 16 January 2022 in Cairo, Egypt.

Speaking at the occasion, Amb. Mohamed Gad, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the African Union underscored the importance of fulfilling health policies in achieving a healthy African population while re-affirming the support of the Arab Republic of Egypt in the establishment and operationalization of AMA.

H.E. Minata Samate Cessouma the Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development at the African Union Commission emphasized the urgent need for operationalizing the AMA particularly as it will play a significant role in the fight against future pandemics and infectious disease outbreaks.

Similarly, on the sidelines of the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of the Union, the Republic of Comoros and Equatorial Guinea became the twenty-seventh (27th) and twenty-eighth (28th) African Union (AU) member states to sign the Treaty of the African Medicines Agency (AMA) at the AU Commission on 2 February 2022, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

H.E. Minata Samate Cessouma the Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development at the African Union Commission preceded over the two signing ceremonies.

AMA will among other functions monitor the medicines market through the collection of samples in every State Party to ensure the quality of selected drugs, have them analysed and provide the results to State Parties and other interested parties, who will thus have reliable information on the quality of the drugs circulating in their countries and, where necessary, will take appropriate measures. AMA will also develop systems to monitor, evaluate and assess the comprehensiveness of national medical products regulatory systems with the view to recommending measures that will improve efficiency and effectiveness.

AMA shall build on the efforts of the African Medicines Regulatory

Harmonization (AMRH) initiative (2009), which is led by the Africa Union Development Agency - the New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD). The African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization (AMRH) Initiative is a stepwise approach on harmonization of requirements for registration of generic medicines while slowly expanding the scope to cover other regulatory functions such as clinical trials and ethics oversight, post-marketing surveillance including safety monitoring, and good manufacturing practice (GMP) inspections.

To date, twenty-eight (28) member states have signed the Treaty, twenty-one (21) of these have ratified and nineteen (19) have deposited the instruments of ratification to the Commission. The 15th instrument of ratification was deposited at the African Union Commission on the 5th of October 2021 and the Treaty entered into Force (as per Article 38) of the Treaty on 5th November 2021.

The Commission expects to have the operationalization of AMA underway in 2022. The African Union Commission encourages all its member states to sign and ratify the Treaty for the establishment of AMA in the interest of public health, safety, and security and of all African citizens in particular.

The Treaty is available for signature at the Headquarters of the Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

About the African Medicines Agency (AMA)

The AMA Treaty was adopted by Heads of States and Government during their 32nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly on 11 February 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The African Medicines Agency aspires to enhance the capacity of State Parties and AU recognized Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to regulate medical products to improve access to quality, safe, and efficacious medical products on the continent. AMA shall build on the efforts of the African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization (AMRH) initiative (2009), which is led by the Africa Union Development Agency - the New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD). The AMRH initiative provides guidance to AU-recognized Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Health Organizations (RHOs), to facilitate harmonization of regulatory requirements and practice among the national medicines authorities (NMRAs) of the AU Member States. AMA will be the second specialized health agency of the African Union after the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC).



From Left: Permanent Representative of Comoros to the African Union H.E. Minata Samate Cessouma the Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development at the African Union Commission and Mohamed Salem Boukhari Khalil, Office of the Legal Counsel

The Treaty for the establishment of the African Medicines Agency (AMA) was adopted in February 2019, by the 32nd Session of the Assembly of Head of State and Government. The Assembly further called on its Member States to sign and ratify the Treaty in order for the Treaty to enter into force as soon as possible (Assembly/AU/Dec.735 (XXXII)).

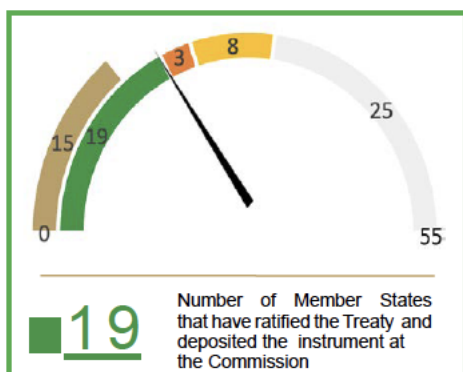
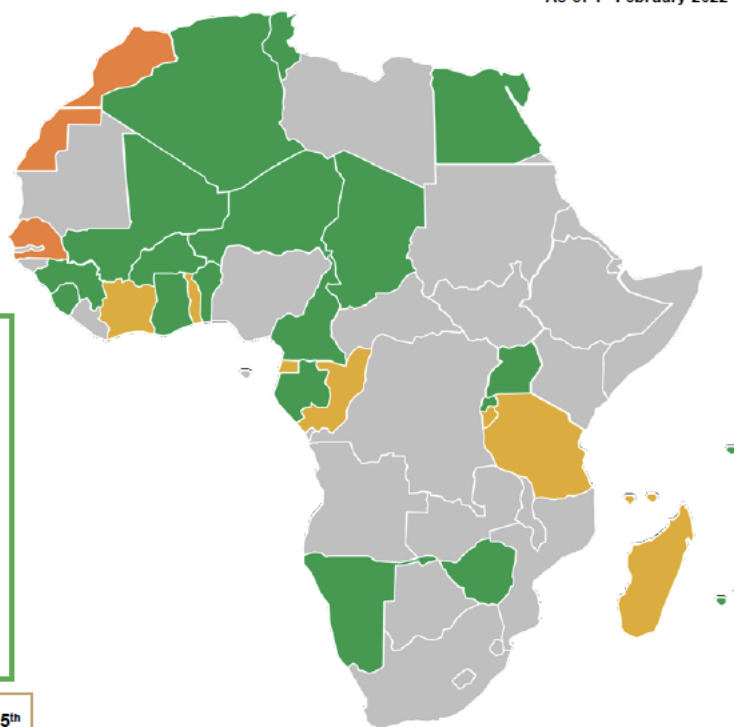
AMA will be the second continental health agency after the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention ([Africa CDC](#)), that will enhance the capacity of States Parties and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to regulate medical products in order to improve access to quality, safe and efficacious medical products on the continent. AMA will also promote the adoption and harmonization of medical products regulatory policies and standards, as well as provide scientific guidelines and coordinate existing regulatory harmonization efforts in the African Union recognized RECs and Regional Health Organizations (RHOs).

As of 4th February 2022

28 Number of Member States that have signed the AMA Treaty

3 Number of Member States that have ratified the Treaty but not yet deposited the instrument of ratification at the Commission

25 Member States that have neither signed nor ratified



The AMA Treaty entered into force on **5th November 2021** upon the deposit of the 15th instrument of ratification at the African Union Commission

Member States that have only signed the AMA Treaty

1. Burundi
2. Comoros
3. Cote d'Ivoire
4. Republic of Congo
5. Equatorial Guinea
6. Madagascar
7. Tanzania
8. Togo

Member States that have signed and ratified but yet to deposit the instrument of ratification at the Commission

1. Morocco
2. Saharawi
3. Senegal

Member States that have signed, ratified and deposited the instrument of ratification at the Commission

1. Algeria
2. Benin
3. Burkina Faso*
4. Cameroon
5. Chad
6. Egypt
7. Gabon
8. Ghana
9. Guinea
10. Mali
11. Mauritius
12. Namibia*
13. Niger
14. Rwanda
15. Seychelles
16. Sierra Leone
17. Tunisia
18. Uganda
19. Zimbabwe

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*Ratification without signing

UPCOMING EVENTS

Government-Government
Policy Dialogues

4D Dialogues on
Demographic
Diversity and
Dividends

Urbanization and Demographic Dividend(s)

17 March 2022

New York 8:00AM - 11:00AM
Addis Ababa 3:00PM - 6:00PM
Berlin 1:00PM - 4:00PM

#The4Dseries

Photo: TalouAc/Creative Commons

Register here:
unfpa.org/4durbanization

COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT, FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION (2022)



What: The fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Population and Development




Where: United Nations Headquarters in New York

Date: 25 to 29 April 2022.

The special theme of the session: "Population and sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth"

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (HHS)

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