

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Date: 14 February 2024

Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

MEDIA ADVISORY

High-level Working Breakfast on Operationalizing the African Medicines Agency (AMA) & Securing Africa's NTDs-Free Future

INVITATION TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA

What: “High-Level Working Breakfast: Operationalizing the African Medicines Agency (AMA) & Securing Africa's NTDs-Free Future”

When: Friday, February 16, 2024, from 8.00 am to 9.30 am.

Where: Sheraton Hotel in Addis Ababa, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Who: The African Union (AU) Commission, in collaboration with the Governments of the Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania

Background:

The health and well-being of Africans are highlighted as a fundamental building block to achieving the socio-economic and structural transformation as envisaged in the Africa Agenda 2063. It has also been underscored as the main goal of the Africa Health Strategy 2016-2030 through which Essential medicines, Commodity Security and Supply Systems are underscored as a strategic approach. A critical determinant of a healthy and productive population in Africa is access to safe, effective, quality and affordable medicines, medical products and technologies - a core pillar of Universal Health Coverage. To this end, the 32nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly adopted the Treaty for establishing the African Medicines Agency (AMA), Assembly Decision ([Assembly/AU/Dec.735\(XXXII\)](#)), on 11 February 2019, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The AMA Treaty came into force on 5 November 2021 following the deposit of the 15th instrument of ratification.

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) are endemic across the African continent but primarily affect the rural communities where there is limited or no access to quality and affordable health services and low access to sanitation and clean water. Over 1.7 billion individuals are at risk of one or more NTDs with more than 170,000 people per year. NTDs cause severe pain, long-term disability and stigma among those impacted. Among school-going children and youth, NTDs lead to low school attendance and absenteeism and thus negatively affect their learning and education. For adults, the debilitating effects can negatively impact overall productivity, hindering households from engaging in gainful employment or economic productivity and further driving families into abject poverty. This “vicious cycle” impacts the overall long-term economic prosperity of the African population.

The control and elimination of NTDs directly contribute to the universal health coverage (UHC) goals ensuring that populations have access to quality health services they need, when and where they need them, without financial hardship. UHC will not be fully attained without addressing NTDs as part of the national health agenda. NTDs control and elimination strategies should be integrated into the health systems including surveillance systems to monitor and track disease re-emergence. The African Union, at its bi-annual coordination summit in Lusaka in July 2022, adopted the Continental Framework and African Common Position on NTDs, which serves as a guiding document for the fight against these diseases, calling for increased national funding to achieve the goal of elimination.

The effective operationalisation of AMA is envisioned to enhance the capacity of State Parties and the African Union (AU) recognised Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to regulate medical products and technologies to improve access to quality, safe and productive medical products on the continent and address health challenges in Africa such as NTD prevalence.

To this end, the AU Commission, in collaboration with the Governments of the Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania is convening a High-level Working Breakfast on Operationalizing the African Medicines Agency (AMA) & Securing Africa's NTDs-Free Future. The event will take place in three folds; high-level opening remarks, Progress updates on AMA operationalisation and NTDs Advocacy for increased resources and a panel discussion titled ' *Charting the Path on Ensuring Access to Quality, Safe and Efficacious Medicines and Medical Equipment on the African Continent: NTDs as a Pathfinder* ' moderated by the AMA Special Envoy, Honourable Michel Sidibé.

The event will bring together AU Heads of State and Government, Ministers of Health, AU Organs, the Development Community, CSOs and members of the media.

Objectives of the meeting are to:

- i. Present the progress report on AMA operationalisation.
- ii. Highlight the status of ratifications by AU Member States and make a case for increased ratification and support to AMA.
- iii. Discuss collaboration moving forward with AMA stakeholders.
- iv. Galvanize pledges from AU Member States to mobilize resources for NTDs elimination at the national level and support the end of river blindness and elephantiasis-free Africa initiative.

Expected outcomes of the meeting:

- i. Information note on recommendations from the panel discussion.
- ii. A comprehensive report on the meeting outcomes and way forward.

Participation at the event:

Attendance of the press is by invitation only. **Members of the press can submit their request to attend or interview the delegates to the following:**

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