

**Directorate of Information and Communication**

Press Release No. 2013

African Healthy Lifestyle Day 2013 " Saying Yes To Life"**Addis Ababa, 8 March 2013:**

The African Union Medical Services Directorate organized three days events to commemorate the fifth “African Healthy Lifestyle Day” under the theme “**SAY YES TO LIFE**” in its headquarters in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia. This event brought together officials and staff of the AU Commission, Embassies as well as their family members

and the broader African communities.

The “**African Healthy Lifestyle Day**” is celebrated by many African countries every last Friday of February since July 2008 and it is about living a healthy life.

Today March 8th, the Directorate proceeded to a number of screenings of Hypertension and Diabetes to encourage early diagnostics in a tent located in the compound. Open air aerobics session was performed by Nurses and AUC staff to promote exercise for a healthy life after distributing advocacy materials such as flyers, T-shirts, and policy documents.



The year 2013 was focused on prevention of Non-communicable diseases such as Type 2 Diabetes and Hypertension & Dyslipidemia. Dr. Gabriel Shebale and Dr. Moges Kebebew gave lectures to the AUC Staff on those two fatal diseases on March 7th, 2013.

Dr. Gabriel Shebale, cardiologist, presented Cardio-Vascular Diseases (CVD) as the “silent killers and are one of the non-communicable diseases that have been fatal to unknown number of Africans and more than 5 Million Americans in 2012 only. CVDs have very little or no symptom until it has reached a certain level, he added.



He emphasized that the risk of stroke for Africans is 3 times ‘more common’ than other populations in the world and listed some major risk factors that could expose to CVD such as High Blood pressure and Cholesterol levels, Obesity, age, Physical Inactivity, stress and smoking.

On his part, Dr. Moges Kebebew, Diabetes expert labeled the type 2 diabetes disease as global “human, social and economic epidemic” and concerned 371 Million people worldwide in 2012 and represents 8.3% of the adult population. He said this epidemic

killed more than 4.8 Million people in 2012, cost around 471 Billion USD and is expected to expand and reach 552 million people by 2030.

The Doctors insisted that a healthy life style can unquestionably reduce risk to be exposed or die of CVD or Type 2 Diabetes.

They also highlighted that these diseases are “lifetime challenges” that can be prevented by adoption of healthy life style through regular exercise (at least 30 minutes a day 5 times a week), healthy eating habits (considerably reducing salt and sugar intake and completely avoid fat and consumption of fruits and vegetables), reducing stress, avoidance of alcohol and tobacco abuse.

On the 9th of March, a group composed of officials and staff of the AU commission, various Embassy and their family members will celebrate the day by a walk from Arat kilo area back to the AUC Headquarter.

A healthy life is a way of living that allows one to enjoy more aspects of life in a more fulfilling way. In a nutshell, living a healthy lifestyle is about saying “**YES TO LIFE!**”