



## **Joint Press Statement**

### **AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION PLEDGES 1 MILLION TO EBOLA RESPONSE**

**AUC and the WHO Urge Member States to replenish the AU Emergency Fund and the African Public Health Emergency Fund to support affected countries**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia –13 August 2014:** The African Union Commission pledged on Wednesday, 13 August, to support the ongoing continental and global efforts to turn the tide against the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria with one million US dollars from its Humanitarian Fund.

“The African Union Commission is committed to ensure that measures are put in place to prevent the further spread of the epidemic and that adequate support is provided to the affected communities”, said Dr. Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko, Commissioner for Social Affairs of the African Union Commission.

The African Union will call for an extraordinary Meeting of the Bureau of the 6th Conference of the AU Ministers of Health in September to lobby Member States to replenish the African Union Special Emergency Fund for Drought and Famine which will also now cover public health. In addition the meeting will also call for the WHO managed African Public Health Emergency Fund to be replenished to support affected countries. The meeting will coincide with a donor’s conference on the Ebola outbreak taking place in September 2014 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to step up Africa’s efforts and to consolidate global support.

“The Ebola Virus Disease outbreak demonstrates that there is still an urgent need for the African countries to strengthen their health systems and disaster risk management”, said Dr Pierre M’Pele-Kilebou, WHO Representative to Ethiopia, “The African Union and the World Health Organisation are working closely to mobilise African countries and the international community to respond effectively to this public health emergency,”

The African Union established the African Public Health Emergency Fund in 2012 which is managed by WHO. More than \$700,000 has been spent from the fund since the Ebola outbreak began. The first Joint AU/WHO meeting of African Ministers of Health held in April 2014 in Luanda, Angola, issued a strong statement of solidarity, which is now translating into action with the contribution of \$3.5 million by the Federal Republic of Nigeria and \$200, 000 by the Republic of Botswana to the on-going efforts.

The Ebola outbreak is providing the impetus to speed up the establishment of the African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention for early detection, preparedness and response. It is expected that by early 2016 at the latest, the centre should be functioning as an institution of the African Union. The African Union is also strengthening the regional mechanisms to prevent and control animal diseases that can be spread across the borders and diseases which can be transmitted to humans from animals. These initiatives are being integrated into established institutional structures of Regional Economic Communities and Member States in order to ensure political support and long-term sustainability.

The West Africa Ebola Response Plan, developed by WHO in conjunction with the governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone requires more than \$ 100 million for additional health personnel, supplies and support to coordinated action. Surveillance systems and community education needs to be strengthened urgently to stop the epidemic

The current epidemic is the biggest and most complex that the world has experienced since the first human outbreak occurred in 1976. The current epidemic has a total of 1848 suspected cases with 1013 deaths reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) as of 9 August 2014.

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#### **About the African Union**

The African Union spearheads Africa's development and integration in close collaboration with African Union Member States, the Regional Economic Communities and African citizens. AU Vision: to accelerate progress towards an integrated, prosperous and inclusive Africa, at peace with itself, playing a dynamic role in the continental and global arena, effectively driven by an accountable, efficient and responsive Commission. Learn more at: <http://www.au.int/en/>; <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola>

#### **About WHO**

WHO is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends. Learn more at: <http://www.who.int>