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AFRICA URGED TO SCALE UP EFFORTS AGAINST NON COMMUNICABLE AND NEGLECTED DISEASES**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 22 April**

2013- An experts' meeting, bringing together health experts from member states of the African Union, started at the African Union today, as a preparatory forum for the ministerial meeting to take place later this week, under the theme "The impact of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) on Development in Africa". The meeting will provide the Ministers of Health with an opportunity to share

experiences and learn from each other on on-going programmes and activities on health. One of the key outcomes of the meeting will be a continental strategy to increase resource mobilization, especially domestic resources, and enhance the efficiency of health programmes in Africa, before the 66th World Health Assembly in May 2013.

African Union Director of Social Affairs, Dr Olawale Maiyegun today urged the experts to ensure that Africa scales up its efforts to beat both the NCDDs and NTDs due to their negative impact on communities.

"There should be no complacency, as the WHO's recent report warns that dengue is now the world's fastest spreading tropical disease and could well become a pandemic", Dr Maiyegun said in relation to NTDs.

Speaking about the NCDs, the Director said, "Risk factors stemming from tobacco and alcohol consumption, unhealthy diets, obesity and physical inactivity are contributing to high mortality rates in Africa with negative impact on Africa's socio-economic development".

In their deliberations, the experts are guided by a number of key reports. Among them are: Maternal Newborn and Child Health (MNCH); the Abuja Call on Universal Access to HIV/AIDS, TB & Malaria Services: African Common Position on Pain Management; and the AU-G8 Accountability on AIDS, TB & Malaria.

The experts meeting ends on the 24th April, and the Ministerial meeting will run from 25th to 26th April.

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