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DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

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### ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN FIRST LADIES AGAINST HIV/AIDS (OAFLA) TECHNICAL ADVISERS MEETING

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 23 May 2013:** In line with the framework of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the African Union Commission (AUC), a technical advisers meeting of OAFLA (Organization of African First Ladies Against HIV/AIDS) is being held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia at the African Union old building, from the 23- 24 May, 2013.

The first ladies of Africa, as women and mothers, bring a unique passion, perspective and position to fight against HIV/AIDS. These leaders want to utilize their roles as first ladies and join forces with those responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa.



Today's meeting was attended by consultants and participants from different African countries including Namibia, Swaziland, Chad, Nigeria and a host of other countries. The Executive Secretary of OAFLA, Sonia Ndimbira opened the

session by welcoming and thanking the participants for attending the event. Tigist Alemu, A consultant for OAFLA welcomed the participants and further highlighted

that the technical advisers meeting is being held in order to contribute ways in which HIV/AIDS can be tackled both at the community, regional and national level.



The advisors also tackled the question of where the continent wants to see OAFLA in the next five years in terms of what it wants to achieve by the aforementioned time. The improvement of the vision of the organization was also

critically discussed, in terms of what distinguishes the organization from other organizations (uniqueness). Tigist Alemu stated that it is very important for OAFLA



to carry out its activities diligently because, it is a life saving/ maintaining organization therefore, it is indeed crucial for the continent as a whole but specifically for those that are infected/ affected by HIV/AIDS.

The goals of OAFLA were also discussed. They include the following:

- Reducing new HIV Infections among the general population by promoting the prevention of mother-child-transmission (PMTCT) continuing education, information and communication (in school and out of school).
- Reducing stigma and discrimination (mobilization support for People Living with HIV and AIDS orphans)
- Increasing Anti retroviral Therapy (ART) coverage through universal access, mass drug production and the mobilization of the public for action.
- The promotion of women's rights and opportunities through campaigning for the elimination of gender based violence and also for the lobby of women's small scale projects and entrepreneurs.
- Reducing maternal and child deaths by promoting the benefit of immunization, integration of services and spouses support, the promotion of cancer screening and also the need to improve the nutritional status of mothers and their children was also stressed.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, 2013, the major common challenges will be identified and discussed by the consultants and participants. Possible solutions and recommendations will also be brainstormed in the session.

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