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AFRICAN LEADERS PLEDGE TO INTENSIFY EFFORTS TOWARDS ENDING AIDS, TB AND MALARIA



Review first year's progress toward implementing the African Union Roadmap

Addis Ababa, 26 May, 2013- 13 African Heads of State and 50 other global leaders met today and reviewed progress toward implementing transformative reforms in the AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB) and malaria responses, and pledged to accelerate the pace of change (increase annual domestic funding for health care, particularly AIDS, TB and malaria services). AIDS Watch Africa

(AWA), an advocacy platform for African Heads of State on AIDS, TB and Malaria convened the meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the side-lines of the African Union summit celebrating 50 years of African Unity.

African leaders also reviewed progress made in implementing a *Roadmap on Shared Responsibility and Global Solidarity for AIDS, TB and Malaria Response in Africa*, which they adopted last July to chart a new course for the continent's response to the three diseases.



“As leaders committed to a healthy continent, we must redouble our efforts to ensure universal access to HIV, TB and Malaria services in order to attain zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths, as well as the elimination of TB and Malaria”, said Mr. Haile Mariam

Desalegne, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, who is also the chair of the African Union and AIDS Watch Africa.

The African Union Commission (AUC) Chairperson, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, said that adopting new health financing measures will demonstrate Africa's strong political commitment to the health and development of its people.

"Our continent is demonstrating strong political commitment and action by embracing transformative reforms to address AIDS, TB and malaria" said Dr. Zuma "To achieve the MDG targets all Member States of the AU will need to develop sustainable investment plans which will shift the focus from reliance on external funding to innovative domestic resource mobilisation." she said.

AIDS Watch Africa was founded at the Abuja Special Summit in 2001 to set the agenda for top-level leadership for the African AIDS response and in January 2012 its mandate was expanded to include TB and Malaria. The organisation took on responsibility for monitoring progress toward the three action pillars of the Roadmap, which include: (1) creating more diversified, balanced, and sustainable financing models; (2) expanding access to medicines through local production and regulatory harmonization; and (3) establishing strong leadership, governance, and oversight.

I celebrate your progress – and I share your resolve to do even more. I urge you to continue investing in an AIDS-free Africa" said United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, "This will improve the health, empowerment and human rights of your citizens"

The recent success in responding to AIDS shows how Africa's leaders are leading a wave of sustainable transformation in global health with African-sourced solutions.

"African leadership is the elusive magic bullet that has irrevocably changed the course of the three diseases and now can do even more," said UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé. "I am confident that African leadership can be the pathfinder to better global health."

To advance toward the roadmap's first pillar, a number of countries have begun to implement innovative AIDS financing measures intended to reduce dependence on external funders. Zimbabwe and Kenya now earmark a portion of domestic tax revenues for an AIDS Trust Fund, while countries such as Benin, Congo, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Niger, Rwanda, and Uganda have established special HIV levies on mobile phone usage or airfares. Taking a different approach, South Africa reduced its spending on antiretroviral medications by 53% by reforming its tender process to increase competition among suppliers.

Dr. Mark Dybul, the Executive Director of The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, commended the Heads of State and Government saying that their leadership on the issue is yet another resolve to ensure that AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria can become diseases of the past.

"We have a moment of historic greatness, and if we all work together with a sense of shared responsibility and coordinated action, we will defeat these diseases," he said.

Trans-continental partnerships have been established in the past year to improve the availability of affordable HIV treatment, a key goal of the second pillar of the Roadmap. These include the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa Business Plan, which will support the scale-up of local drug manufacturing, and the African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization Programme, which will help regulate drug quality and delivery systems so that lives are not lost because treatments are unsafe or unavailable.

To improve leadership, governance, and oversight, the aim of the third pillar, a series of high-level meetings across the continent have been held over the past 12 months to reaffirm the urgency of the AIDS, TB and Malaria responses on the African agenda. Countries including Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda and South Africa have also integrated HIV programming and oversight into their general health infrastructure, streamlining disease coordination and governance.

For more information, visit

<http://www.au.int>

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About UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, is an innovative United Nations partnership that leads and inspires the world in achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Learn more at: <http://www.unaids.org/en/>

About the Global Fund is a unique global public/private partnership dedicated to attracting and disbursing additional resources to prevent and treat AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. This partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector and affected communities represents a new approach to international health financing. The Global Fund works in close collaboration with other bilateral and multilateral organisations to supplement existing efforts in dealing with the three diseases.