

Opening Remarks

By

**H.E. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal
Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Chairperson
of the Executive Council of the African Union**

At

**The Special Summit of the African Union on
HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**

13 July 2013

Abuja

***Excellency Ambassador Ashiru Olubenga, Minister for Foreign
Affair of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,***

Excellencies Ministers and Heads of Delegations,

***Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the
African Union Commission,***

Commissioner for Social Affairs,

Representatives of United Nation Organizations,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to this session of the Executive Council convened to prepare the Special Summit of African Heads of State and Government on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria under the theme ***“Ownership, Accountability, and Sustainability of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Response in Africa: Past, Present, and Future”***.

On behalf of all my colleagues and that of myself, I wish to express our sincere thanks to the people and government of the

Federal Republic of Nigeria for organizing this Special Summit together with the African Union, the United Nations Agencies and other development partners. We are also very grateful for the warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded to us since our arrival in Abuja.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As clearly indicated in the theme, this Special Summit affords us the opportunity to take stock of the progress thus far made and the challenges encountered in our fight against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. It is an understatement to state that these diseases are major causes of morbidity and mortality in our continent posing serious challenges to the socio-economic development of Africa. In this regard, it is timely that we review the implementation of the various declarations and plans of action adopted in the course of the last decade.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is encouraging to note that some of our member States have made significant advances towards achieving HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria related MDGs. In my previous capacity as Minister of Health, I have personally been involved in the multifaceted work and the progress made by Ethiopia over the last decade. Our achievement is indeed the result of strong country ownership and leadership, active community involvement, improved health system and unprecedented global support in creating access to and delivery of life saving services.

While we draw enormous satisfaction from our achievements, we, nevertheless, recognize the need to further enhance our efforts towards reversing the impact of these diseases by ensuring universal access to health services and strengthened health systems especially for the poor and most marginalized population.

As we all know, not many member States are on track to achieve health related MDG targets. This is of course a matter of concern and the need to redouble our efforts to make progress cannot be overemphasized.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The heavy burden Africa shoulders in terms improving the well-being of its population is complex and also demands huge resources. In this regard, I believe what Africa needs today is a vast reservoir of knowledge to better understand the challenge and to respond accordingly.

For this to be done effectively, Ethiopia wishes to propose establishing an “African Center for Diseases Control and Prevention (African –CDC) or Health Commission for Africa under the umbrella of the African Union. The establishment of such a Center will certainly go a long way in helping Africa to generate much needed information and research taking into consideration some of the unique health problems.

Before I conclude, I would like to state my pleasure to preside over this special session, which will deliberate on issues that I have been intimately involved with throughout much of my professional life like my dear sister Dr. Zuma. I am confident that the outcome of this Special Summit will reinforce our commitment in the fight against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria as well as improve

maternal, newborn and child health and draw appropriate lessons from our successes and shortcomings in terms achieving the health related MDGs.

I end my brief remarks by wishing all of us a fruitful deliberation.

I thank you