

AFRICAN UNION

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## OPENING REMARKS

BY

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**AT THE BREAKFAST BRIEFING**

**TO REVIEW PROGRESS IN AFRICA'S FIGHT  
AGAINST MALARIA AND ANNOUNCE A NEW  
INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT 10 HIGH-BURDEN  
COUNTRIES**

**ABUJA, NIGERIA**

**13 JULY 2013**

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## PROTOCOL

This is the second time this year alone that the African Union is joining RBM Partnership to cohost a breakfast session. (In Addis Ababa on World Malaria Day and in Abuja at this Special Summit with WHO and ALMA) What does this illustrate? It illustrates the strength and level of our partnership and how determined we are to work together to eradicate malaria as well as completely roll back its ravages from the face of the continent

In May this year, at the World Health Assembly, I was privileged to have attended the Ministerial Session of the 24<sup>th</sup> RBM Partnership Board Meeting in Geneva at the behest of my dear sister Madam Toure, whose tireless efforts in the anti-malaria campaign have been tremendous and remarkable.

During that occasion, I took the opportunity to remind Ministers of the appeal we made to them in April during the commemoration of the World Malaria Day to increase political commitment, action and domestic funding for malaria control efforts. My justification for such an appeal, has always been based on the fact that external funding, which is now ebbing, has never been predictable nor guaranteed. Moreover, I stressed the need to scale up efforts politically, to mobilize domestic funding as individual countries and collectively. I also warned of the dangers of complacency and hesitance and how both could be detrimental to Africa, which shares the bulk of the burden of Malaria morbidity and mortality. I further mentioned about the high price the continent could pay for such serious omissions in human, productivity and financial costs, which put together, could be estimated to be not below the staggering sum of US\$12 billion each year.

### Your Excellencies,

The African Union is more than ready to work with all stakeholders to ensure that the ever-increasing funding gap, which is now shockingly standing at US\$3.6 billion for Africa alone, is narrowed. Our position is undoubtedly understandable: our people are in the firing line. For that reason, the continental organization will not allow gains made in the

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trying times to roll back Malaria to be reversed or permit the momentum to eradicate the killer disease to diminish. It is against this background, therefore, that serious consideration should be given to the fashioning of innovative domestic funding models in order to close the gap created by receding resources towards the fight against Malaria.

The Continental organization's history in the struggles against Malaria, illustrates its avowed determination not to give up or give in to a merciless and deadly disease that has claimed the lives of millions of our people especially children. The AU is prepared to try all options, including new ideas, in order to fight the scourge.

In this direction, we were unperturbed when a number of Ministers of Health made interventions during the Conference of Ministers of Health extolling the positive and amazing results of the use of DDT. We hope to listen and to further encourage discussions on this issue. We also believe that more needs to be done to save lives in Africa, through scaling up partnerships, investment in prevention and timely diagnosis and prompt treatment of Malaria. This will only have impact if communities are dedicated and determined to take informed action as required.

Finally allow me to end my statement by reiterating our support for the efforts of Roll Back Malaria Partnership, ALMA and WHO and to commend them for the indefatigable and positive steps taken so far to rein in malaria. You can count on the African Union as your first constituency and as an unwavering ally in the fight against malaria.

I thank you.

