



**Talking points of the AU Commission Chairperson, Dr.  
Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, at the launch of the Africa Against  
Ebola Ethiopia SMS Campaign Launch**

20 December 2014. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**A very warm welcome to the African Union Headquarters and greetings to the CEO of the Ethio Telecommunications, representatives from Ethiopia Business, and to our partner, the Ethiopian Private-Public Consultative Forum.**

**Welcome to the Representatives of the Media and AU Staff**

We were here just over a month ago at the Private Sector Roundtable against Ebola, where we discuss two main issues.

Firstly, we wanted the business community to join the fight against Ebola, and we want them to contribute financially and other capacities they had to assist. Secondly, we told the telecoms companies that we want to galvanise Africans as individuals, who may not be in business or who are not health workers that can go to these countries, to make a contribution. I've spoken to many individuals who asked me what they can contribute.

The major mobile network operators across Africa have come together since then. We are proud of the response to the call, and across the continent we have countries with their telecoms companies launching the Africa Against Ebola SMS campaign. We also thank our governments and regulators for giving permissions for the common short codes.

Since the beginning of December, countries across the continent have launched the Africa Against Ebola SMS campaign:

- **7979** in Ethiopia, Botswana, Burundi, Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe
- **40797** in South Africa
- **6969** in Chad
- **1919** in Senegal

We are also grateful to Ethiopia, because they have this week sent 187 of their young men and women as health workers, to work on the frontline. As the figures stand now, Ethiopia have the African largest contingent on the ground, then Nigeria and others will follow like the DRC next week and then Kenya.

For Ethiopia, this must have been also a tough decision, because Ethiopia is also raising resources for the Renaissance dam, and therefore you joining this campaign is a true act of solidarity. I believe the Ethiopian nation will rise to the occasion, because they have seen their young men and women leaving for Sierra Leone and Liberia.

We therefore thank the Ethiopian Government, the Ethiopian Private Sector and to Ethio Telecoms.

We are very proud of all of our ASEOWA volunteers, young men and women, who are part of this African fight.

Our partners from outside Africa have supporters us, and they can also feel proud that Africa is sending its young men and women in numbers to the frontline, and are also contributing financially. We are not only waiting for others to do things for us, but we are helping ourselves. When your house is on fire, you call on the neighbours to help, but you also find the buckets of water to help extinguish the fire.

Through all these efforts, we hope to be able to make a difference in the fight against ebola, that we can end it in 2015. We now have just under 500 health workers on the ground, through your efforts, we want to take it to above 1000 health workers in the next month.

Ethiopia occupies a special place in the history of our continent, it was the headquarters of the OAU and now of the AU, and therefore it is appropriate that they have shown the solidarity and unity, by sending there men and women to the frontlines of the fight against Ebola.

Africa has been doing this with regards to conflicts on the continent, we are the cheetahs and sprint to get on the ground to stop the killings; the UN are the elephants being slower to respond. For example in CAR we were there first and handed over to the UN in September, we are still in Somalia.

Ordinarily it is the responsibility of the WHO for global health emergencies, but this epidemic was different, we all had to contribute to this effort and all put our shoulders to the wheel.

Africa has a long and proud history of solidarity, of caring and working together, and the Africa against Ebola campaign that we are launching today, is an example of this.

Many countries are celebrating 25 December and in Ethiopia on 7 January, as we do so, we must remember that our brothers and sisters in Sierra Leone and the other countries will not have a festive season. As we donate through the SMS campaign, we must be with them in solidarity during this trying time, as we celebrate Christmas.

We can discuss with our people how to avoid Ebola, even if you are in the affected countries. But even if you do contract the virus, and you get treatment early, you can survive. We all talk about the deaths, but there are a huge numbers of survivors and they have joined the fight against Ebola in the forefront, in their communities to ensure that they understand the importance of early reporting and seeking treatment, because chances of survival are greater.

Finally, even if not directly affected, we can all contribute.

The AU message is therefore that you can Avoid Ebola, you can Recover from Ebola and you can Contribute towards to stop Ebola.

Together we can defeat Ebola