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Africa Leadership Meeting: Investing in Health

**Briefing document for the Specialised Technical Committee (STC) on Finance,
Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration**

ADVANCING THE “AFRICA LEADERSHIP MEETING” TO INCREASE DOMESTIC INVESTMENT IN HEALTH

February 5th, 2020

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to brief AU Member State Ministries of Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration on the commitments to health financing adopted by Heads of State at the 32nd Ordinary Assembly in 2019, to provide an update on progress in implementing these commitments and to request Ministers to support the efforts of the AU Commission to implement the decisions of the Assembly on health financing.

Request

For Ministers of Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration to:

- **Take note of 32nd AU Assembly declarations on health financing;**
- Review country performance against the benchmarks of the 2019 & 2020 ***Africa Scorecard on Domestic Financing for Health***;
- **Endorse the domestic health financing ‘Tracker’** being developed to complement the *Scorecard*.
- **Endorse the health financing ‘hubs’ being established across Africa’s five regions.**
- **Work closely with Ministers of Health** in the effort to **improve the efficiency and effectiveness** of how resources for health are raised, pooled, allocated and spent.
- **Agree to meet with Ministers of Health biennially** (on the margins of global socio-economic events such as the World Bank's Spring Meetings, the AFDB annual meeting or another platform convened by the African Union Commission) to **discuss health financing and to review progress against benchmarks**
- **Report back to the AU Assembly each year** on progress in increasing domestic investment in health.

Background

Agenda2063, Africa’s 50-year development plan, prioritises domestic resource mobilisation and trade as the main sources of financing for the continent’s structural transformation. It further emphasises the need for a ‘paradigm shift’ towards African-led initiatives for funding disease responses. The *Africa Health Strategy, 2016-2030* posits that sustainable and predictable health financing mechanisms are essential to build viable health systems and are a critical ingredient for the achievement of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

The Africa Leadership Meeting (ALM) (Addis Ababa, February 2019)

To drive progress towards these objectives, the then AU Chairperson H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, convened the *Africa Leadership Meeting: Investing in Health (ALM)* on the side-lines of the 32nd Ordinary Assembly of Head of States and Governments of the African Union on 9th February 2019.

The *Africa Leadership Meeting* was the first platform to bring together governments, the private sector and the global development community to coordinate and accelerate progress toward achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

The meeting began with recognition from Africa's Heads of State that while progress in improving health outcomes over the last 20 years has been impressive, African countries have not significantly increased domestic investment in health. In view of more than half of Africa's population lacking access to essential health services and millions dying each year from commonly preventable diseases there was consensus among the more than 500 attendees that this is unsustainable. Indeed, African leaders emphasised the need to invest in health to drive human capital development as the basis upon which Africa's sustainable economic growth is to be built. Finally, the ALM emphasised the need for greater commitment among development partners for increased commitments for health financing.

AU Assembly Declarations on health financing (Addis Ababa, Feb 2019)

During the 32nd AU Assembly in February 2019 the Heads of State and Government endorsed the outcomes of the *Africa Leadership Meeting (ALM)* and adopted declarations¹ in support of mobilising greater domestic resources for health in Africa.

The Assembly declarations include commitments to:

- **Increase domestic investment in health** and to review country performance annually – at the level of the Heads of State – against the benchmarks of the *Africa Scorecard on Domestic Financing for Health*.
- **Digitise the *Africa Scorecard on Domestic Financing for Health*** so that the data used to review performance is more widely disseminated.
- **Complement the *Scorecard* with a *domestic health financing 'Tracker'*** that will track more granular 'enablers' of progress towards the desired *Scorecard* outcomes.
- **Establish *Regional Health Financing Hubs* in each of Africa's five regions**, to drive country implementation of the AU Assembly resolutions and to coordinate the alignment of development partner efforts to Africa's priorities
- **Convene African Ministers of Finance and Health every two years to discuss health financing and to review progress against benchmarks.** Ministers will report back on progress in increasing domestic investment in health to the AU Assembly each year.
- **Improve public financial management (PFM) capacity** to help improve tax collection and/or increase the proportion of tax revenue collected as a percentage of GDP, through equitable and efficient general taxation and

¹ **Assembly/AU/Decl.1 (XXXII):** Declaration on the progress report of AIDS Watch Africa (AWA): Outcome of the Leadership in Health financing Funds High-Level Meeting and,

Assembly/AU/Decl.4 (XXXII): Declaration on the Africa Leadership Meeting – Investing in Health "Addis Ababa Commitments towards Shared Responsibility and Global Solidarity for Increased Health Financing"

improved revenue collection, and strengthen the capacities of Ministries of Finance and tax revenue authorities to achieve this.

- **Enhance national health financing systems**, including by exploring options to reduce fragmentation, explore national health insurance (where appropriate), strengthen capacity to purchase services effectively and increase efforts to improve prevention, cost-effectiveness and allocative efficiency.
- Reorient health spending and health systems to **target the diseases and conditions across the lifecycle that have the greatest impact on mortality and human capital development with the mix of interventions that will deliver the greatest impact in combatting them.**
- **Appoint H.E. President Paul Kagame as AU Leader for health financing, requesting** President Kagame to report back annually to the AU Assembly and to convene counterparts to drive Africa's health financing agenda through the health financing Hubs.
- The **AU Commission will lead implementation** of these AU Assembly resolutions and the coordination and alignment of partners to Africa's priorities.

AU STC on Health, Population & Drug Control (HPDC) (July 2019)

AU Member States met at the ministerial level during the AU *Specialised Technical Committee (STC) meeting on Health, Population and Drug Control (HPDC)* in Cairo, Egypt in July/August 2019. The STC-HPDC meeting was the first meeting of AU Member States on health since the AU Assembly. It provided the opportunity to brief Member States on the ALM and the related AU Assembly Declarations on domestic health financing, and to set out the AU Commission's programme of work to implement the commitments.

Member States adopted a report by the Commission (AUC) on the *Africa Leadership Meeting (ALM)*. In addition to a detailed implementation plan for Member States to domesticate the commitments of the AU Assembly declaration the report set out that:

- The AUC will lead post-ALM implementation and will coordinate partners.
- The AUC will define the **'Regional Health Financing Hubs', which are to be based within the AU's RECs (Regional Economic Communities).**
- The AUC is to outline the process through which the *Domestic Health Financing 'Tracker'* will be developed and is to lead this process.
- **The AUC will report to AU Heads of State on post-ALM implementation through the AIDS Watch Africa (AWA) platform of African Heads of State, which meets annually.**

AU Member States adopted the AU Commission report with the following additions:

1. Development Partners are to align their spending on health to the health priorities of the AU and of Member States, using the *Regional Health Financing Hubs* as a means to achieve alignment and harmonisation.
2. Member States are to address tax avoidance through reconsidering exemption laws & regulations

AU AIDS Watch Africa (AWA) (Kigali, November 2019)

- During the statutory AIDS Watch Africa (AWA) meeting held in Kigali in November 2019 the AU Commission briefed experts on the ongoing health financing efforts at AUC. The final report adopted by AWA Member States recognised the progress made by AUC in implementing the AU Assembly resolutions on health financing, adopted the *Africa Scorecard on Domestic Financing for Health* and endorsed the AU Commissions work to establish the ALM technical working group and its sub-committees on Hubs, Tracker, Private Sector Engagement and Communication and advocacy.”
- The ALM tchnical Working Group met in the margins of AWA Experts Meeting in November 2019 and has developed draft discussion documents for the *Tracker* and *Hubs* which are being refined by the respective sub-committees.
- The AUC met with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the margins of AWA Experts Meeting in November 2019 to introduce the AU Assembly resolutions on health financing and request them to partner with the AU in developing the *Hubs*.

Suggested Recommendations to be included in the STC Declaration

1. **COMMEND** the Commission for the progress made in implementing the ALM Declaration and **ENDORSE** the Health Financing Hubs to be housed in RECs, the Health financing Tracker, the Digital Africa Scorecard on Domestic Financing for Health, and the Accountability Framework.
2. **WELCOME** the Commission’s initiative to establish ALM Technical Working Group and sub-committees on Hubs, Tracker, Private Sector Engagement and Communication and Advocacy and **URGE** Ministries of Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration to be part of them and provide necessary support.
3. **RECOGNIZING** that Ministries of Health alone cannot establish sustainable health financing systems and achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) for all in Africa, **REQUEST** the Ministries of Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration to meet every two years with Ministries of Health to discuss health financing and to review progress against benchmarks.

END.