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## US AMBASSADOR BATTLE SHOWS SOLIDARITY WITH AFRICA BY ACCEPTING THE AFRICAN UNION HIV VOLONTEER COUNSELLING AND TESTING SERVICES



**Addis Ababa, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011** – Ambassador Michael A. Battle of the United States Mission to the African Union (USAU), was one of the volunteers today, Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011, to do the HIV screening offered by the African Union (AU) Medical Services Directorate as the AU joins the rest of the International and Continental communities this day, to commemorate the World AIDS Day.

Several free will persons interested to know their status have been going through the Volunteer Counselling and Testing (VCT) services for HIV that started on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011, from **9:00 AM to 5:00 PM**, until **Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2011** at the Headquarters of the AU Commission (AUC), in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The exercise is one of the week-long activities organized by the Department of Social Affairs in collaboration with the Medical Services Directorate of the AU Commission to mark the commemoration of the World Aids Day.

Ambassador Battle was accompanied by his collaborators who witnessed the Volunteer Counselling and Testing provided by the AU Commission's Medical Services Directorate (AU MSD) everybody.

The Medical team expressed appreciation to the gesture of the Ambassador saying that, the example will send out a very powerful message to encourage the people who are still hesitating to get tested.

"I am extremely proud of the African Union for taking leadership on HIV AIDS Day. AIDS is a disease that affects people all over the world. By accepting the volunteer screening today, I want to show that there is no shame in coming out and being tested and screened. I also want to encourage more people to do the same" Ambassador Battle explained. He advised that, the earlier a person can get tested for HIV, the more easy it

is to cure “If we could get more and more people to just come out and have a test it will be better for the entire world”, he underscored.

Ambassador Battle announced that the same screening exercise is done at the US Embassy on the occasion of the World AIDS Day, but he chose to do it at the African Union “to show support and solidarity with the African continent” he emphasized.



Dr. Kilenga Naftal, Consultant and Senior Biologist of the AU MSD, thanked the US Mission and Ambassador Battle for the symbolic and very important gesture. He presented the different services offered by the MSD including medical consultations, paediatric services, scanning for breast cancer, dental and laboratory services. Dr Kilenga also stated that the MSD do not only provide HIV testing but

also treatment for HIV/AIDS for more than 10 years.

It is worth recalling that, the AU Volunteer Counselling and Testing Services (VCT) is currently taking place inside an erected tent in front of the Medical Center where medical experts and practitioners are receiving people of all classes and works of life, including AU Staff who are interested to know about their status.

**For Further Information consult the AU website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int)**

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