

**Press Release N°211/2014****African Union's Executive Council Urges Lifting of Travel Restrictions Related to Ebola Outbreak**

Addis Ababa, 8 September 2014- Member States of the African Union (AU) have been called upon to urgently lift all travel bans and restrictions related to the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak, to respect the principle of free movement, and to ensure that all restrictions are in line with recommendations from the relevant international organisations.

An emergency meeting of the Union's Executive Council held on the 8th of September 2014 at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, to craft a united, comprehensive and collective response to the Ebola outbreak, agreed that any travel related measures should be in line with World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) recommendations, in particular the recommendation for proper screening.

Council requested the AU Commission to work closely with Member States, international and regional organizations, and African partners, with a view to mobilizing adequate resources to respond to the EVD crisis.

The Council requested the Commission to take all the necessary steps for the rapid establishment of an African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ACDCP), pursuant to Assembly Decision AU/Dec.499 (XXII) on the establishment of the centre; and ensure the functioning of the ACDCP by mid-2015, including the enhancement of the early warning systems to address all health emergencies in a timely and effective manner.

The Commission was requested to engage with media and advocacy groups to ensure proper communications about EVD to the general population and the international community at large.

To guarantee adequate funding for emergencies, Council asked the Commission to ensure the replenishment of the AU Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa and called on Member States to make voluntary contributions to the fund.

Further, the Council decided to facilitate the expansion of the mandate of the AU Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa to include public health emergencies and other calamities.

The Executive Council expressed support for the AU Support to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA), and called upon Member States to respond positively and provide adequate numbers of qualified health personnel for ASEOWA, to assist the affected countries to combat the EVD.

It expressed appreciation for the solidarity of many organizations and countries, including African countries, as well as the active mobilization of AU support to ASEOWA.

Council expressed its high appreciation to all the Member States which have provided generous financial, personnel and material assistance to the Member States affected by the epidemic, and called upon all Member States to contribute human, material, and financial resources to contain the spread of the virus. **WZM/HMC**

Full decisions of the emergency meeting of the Executive Council will be posted soon on www.au.int.

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