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**AU and WHO commit to redouble joint efforts to advance the health agenda in Africa***Call for increased investments in health*

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 18 April 2017-** The African Union Commission and the World Health Organization on Thursday reiterated their commitment to strengthen cooperation in the context of the framework for collaboration signed in July 2012. The two institutions work together in advocacy and technical support to the health sector in the Member States of the African Union. Key priorities for the continent include health systems strengthening, addressing health security, communicable and non-communicable diseases and supporting family and reproductive health.

‘Strengthening Africa’s health capacity in disease prevention, detection and rapid response to health threats are key priorities for building resilient health systems that are socially inclusive to drive the social-structural transformation path of Agenda 2063’, said Her Excellency Amira Elfadil, the Commissioner for Social Affairs at the African Union Commission during a courtesy visit by Dr Matshidiso Moeti, the WHO Regional Director for Africa.

The African Union Commission and WHO collaborative framework addresses key areas in health systems strengthening. Addressing communicable diseases that remain the largest cause of ill health in Africa and account for the largest public health funding is a key priority. The two institutions will work together in maternal, neonatal and under five mortality with a focus on quality of care improvement. The documentation, adoption and scaling-up of best practices, the elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV; the promotion of adolescent health and healthy ageing are among the top priorities.

The two bodies will also continue to work towards the achievement of universal access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and the achievement of universal access to immunisation. With the rise of non-communicable diseases on the continent there is need

to accelerate data driven advocacy efforts looking at the risk factors and what policies governments can put in place. The African Union Commission and the World Health Organization are also working together to establish the Africa Medicines Agency that will strengthen regulatory harmonization and ensure increased access to safer and effective medical products.

“Let us work together in advocating for increased domestic investments to achieve universal health coverage and let us strategically combine our technical and political comparative advantages to advance the health agenda on the continent”, said Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa.

The Africa CDC and the WHO are working together to provide timely, actionable, and continent-wide surveillance and disease intelligence data; rapid deployment of coordination and technical expertise to respond to outbreaks, health diplomacy and seamless and well-coordinated regional laboratory and surveillance networks across countries.

For more information visit [www.au.int](http://www.au.int)

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