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African Union and Gates Foundation Strengthen Partnership to Enhance Health Systems and Foster Digital Innovation

In a continued effort to strengthen health regulatory systems across Africa and promote sustainable development, H.E. Ambassador Amma Adomaa Twum-Amoah, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs, and Social Development of the African Union, met with representatives from the Gates Foundation led by the Deputy Director for Africa Regulatory Systems, Mr. David Mukanga on Tuesday 29 April 2025. The meeting focused on advancing public health and resilient systems in Africa, with an emphasis on strengthening regulatory frameworks, supporting the global health agenda and promoting digital innovation, especially Artificial Intelligence (AI).

H.E. Amb. Twum-Amoah acknowledged the strong partnership and expressed her deep appreciation for the Gates Foundation's financial and technical commitment to the Commission — particularly its invaluable contributions to health and nutrition initiatives, as well as the successful launch and swift operationalization of the African Medicines Agency (AMA) in Kigali, Rwanda.

Mr. Mukanga in his response expressed satisfaction at the work done thus far and the significant achievement made since the two organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the side lines of the AU Summit in February 2024. He also indicated the Foundation's continued engagement to advance routine immunization, nutrition, neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), polio eradication and maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH).

The highlighted principles underscored Africa's ownership in health governance and reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable, continent-led health development. This includes fostering regional leadership and strengthening tailored digital health innovations. Central to these efforts is leveraging AI to transform health systems and enhance healthcare delivery. The Foundation supports pilot programs in Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and others, utilizing AI to detect "sound-alike" and "look-alike" drugs. These initiatives refine system specifications and user requirements to empower regulators in enhancing drug safety and efficacy.

Furthermore, they emphasized the importance of enhanced strategic communication and visibility to bridge gaps with partners like the Gates Foundation, alongside stronger engagement with stakeholders, including the African Development Bank (AfDB), to chart a clear path towards sustainable domestic resource mobilization and financial independence.

Moving forward, and in line with the African Union's vision for strong health systems, the African Union and the Gates Foundation will work together to define priorities for the next 5-7 years. This includes the establishment of an African Medicines Agency Trust Fund to support the advancement of health regulations, AI-driven regulatory

solutions and digital platforms for disease surveillance and approval, and the sustainable financing of health initiatives across Africa. The African Union will also prioritise the recruitment of critical staff, including the appointment of the Director-General for the African Medicines Agency, expected at the upcoming Conference of State Parties (CoSP) meeting in June 2025. Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to establishing AU–Gates Foundation technical working group to address fragmentation of work.

To conclude, the Commissioner conveyed the Commission's gratitude to the Government and people of Rwanda for their strong commitment to leading the Continent's health hub and for the successful collaboration in hosting the AMA Headquarters. She also reiterated the Commission's commitment to enhancing its partnership with the Gates Foundation.

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