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**Statement of the African Union Commission  
Chairperson, HE Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma to the  
Meeting on Ebola with the UN Secretary General,  
World Bank President, delegations from the AfDB and  
EU Commission**

Tuesday 28 October 2014, Small Conference Room 3

AU Conference Centre

**Excellency, the UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki Moon**

**Excellency, President of the World Bank Dr. Jim Yong Kim**

**Representatives from the EU Commission, the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank and the UN Family**

**AUC Deputy Chairperson Erastus Mwencha and fellow Commissioners**

**AU Directors**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

We are meeting here at a time when our sisters and brothers in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone are facing grave challenges, as they fight and battle the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), which over the last few months so abruptly halted their path towards development and reconstruction.

The disease, which is not new to the world, and its manifestations in these countries, has caught us by surprise. With the wisdom of hindsight, our responses at all levels - continental, global and national – were slow, and often knee jerk reactions that did not always help the situation.

A few months into this crisis, and based on the experience gained, we know much more and are confident that we must, that we can and that we will, defeat this disease.

We just returned from a visit to Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, along with my brothers Carlos Lopes from the UNECA and Donald Kaberuka from the ADB. During this visit, we met the Presidents, Cabinet Ministers and National Ebola response teams, and in Sierra Leone, with their Parliament.

Wherever we went, we were humbled by the efforts, the determination, the courage and the resilience of the peoples and governments of these countries. They informed us of the multi-sectoral plans they are implementing, with the support of the international community, on treatment, contact tracing, public health education and managing the burial of loved ones.

At the same time, they were very frank about the huge gaps and challenges they face, and therefore on the need for the African Union and the international community to do more, and do it faster.

But we also learnt that Ebola can be prevented, that you can recover from Ebola and that all of us can contribute to the fight against Ebola. We should not give in to the impression of panic that it cannot be prevented or that once you are infected, that it is a death sentence; we can stop transmission and with early treatment, many can survive and have.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Since the first African Ministers of Health meeting in April 2014, which resulted in Member states that previously dealt with the Ebola Virus Disease, sending experts to the countries concerned, the AU's focus remains on the mobilization of health workers and experts to aid the affected countries.

Africa, right from its days of fighting colonialisation, have relied on solidarity, believing that one country can't be free, if all Africa is not free. We therefore call on this African solidarity, that no country will be free and healthy, if one country still faces Ebola.

The Peace and Security Council decided in August to send a humanitarian mission to the affected countries. The African Union Support to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA) was launched, and the first teams of volunteer health workers sent to Liberia and Sierra Leone, with a further team to Guinea by the end of this month.

Based on this initial deployment, it was clear that we need much greater numbers of health workers, and we appealed to the Heads of State and Government to volunteer more.

We are greatly encouraged by the response of over 1000 health workers pledged to date: from ECOWAS, the East African Community, the DRC, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and others. This is in addition to the in-kind and financial support already

provided and pledged by Member states to the governments of the three countries.

We call on other Member States that have not yet responded, to do so in the spirit of solidarity. Every African country must send health workers, no matter how small the number, because in the spirit of solidarity it gives strength to our brothers and sisters in the three countries, that we are with them in this fight

We now have to work with the governments concerned and with our African and international partners to ensure that we raise the resources to ensure the effective deployment of these health workers as soon as possible in the three countries. I am glad that we had the discussions with the UNSG and the President of the World Bank this morning on this matter.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

We are also mobilizing other sectors of the African communities, such as the African business sector; we are talking to the Confederation of African Football and the cultural sector, to do their bit to contribute towards this joint effort of solidarity. We will be meeting African business on 8 November 2014 in Addis Ababa. We believe that the mobilisation of all sectors of African society for this solidarity efforts are critical, we cannot only rely on our governments.

Since the Emergency Executive Council of the AU of early September 2014, we worked tirelessly to break the isolation of the countries, so that we have flights resuming to Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, with effective screening procedures. We already discussed this matter with Ghana, the Chair of ECOWAS, and with Cote d'Ivoire, who has already resumed flights to Guinea and soon to Sierra Leone and Liberia.

As we said at the occasion of the session of the Council: we must not create more adverse conditions for the countries affected than what the disease is already wreaking on them. We will therefore continue work in this regard, including with shipping companies and countries who are refusing docking for ships that have been to the three countries, often to drop much needed supplies and goods.

Finally, working with our African strategic partner institutions, the UNECA and the ADB, we are also looking beyond the Ebola crisis, to ensure that there are plans in place to enable the countries to swiftly recover, and to once more get back on track on the road to ensure development for their people, integration with the continent and shared prosperity for all.

Let me conclude by thanking our partners who are here today at the AU Headquarters, the UN Secretary General, the World Bank President, and representatives from the EU Commission, the ADB and the Islamic Development Bank.

I thank you