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STATEMENT BY

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**AT THE MINISTERIAL FORUM
ON CHINA-AFRICA HEALTH DEVELOPMENT**

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PROTOCOL

Permit me, on behalf of the African Union Commission and the 54 (fifty-four) Member States of the African Union, to express my sincere thanks and profound appreciation to the Government and the people of the People's Republic of China for their splendid generosity, renowned hospitality and elegant but purposeful arrangements.

I am more than grateful to the Government of the People's Republic of China for hosting this remarkable Ministerial Forum on China-Africa Health Development in this great and beautiful city of Beijing.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In February this year, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Madam Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma attended the Fifth China-Africa Strategic Dialogue here in Beijing. During that visit, the Chairperson of the Commission underscored the importance of Africa's partnership with China and the gains the continent as well as China could accrue from the partnership. Her tribute to the strong partnership and cooperation between Africa and China was an echo from what many Africans and Chinese have said and continue to say about the partnership between the two peoples. Since then, many meetings have been held in Africa as well as here in China between Africans and Chinese from both the public and private sectors. Those various meetings are significant layers of our efforts building upon the strong foundation of decades of engagement between China and the continent of Africa.

What does this signify? It signifies that several years of cooperation have shown that China is a reliable partner, a dependable ally and a staunch and sincere believer in South-South Cooperation. It also suggests that China is a willing partner that is neither constrained nor compelled to embrace Africa. To those who do not understand

this relationship, they must look to the past to understand it better. But for us (Chinese and Africans), we understand it and we know it. Our past colonial humiliations, our passion for development, our cravings for a fair international environment and our ardent desire to markedly enhance the lives of our citizens, have made the partnership more endearing and enduring.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This brings me to the purpose of our presence here in Beijing: enhancing the lives of our citizens by prioritizing health.

“Health”, as Lao Tzu, has stated, “is the greatest possession”. No individual and no nation can ever hope to live in peace, happiness and prosperity without prioritizing such a great possession. In today’s world, where diseases are no respecters of national boundaries, laws and sovereignty; where multiple drug resistance tuberculosis, Corona virus, bird flu, HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases are comfortably at home anywhere, it is but just and imperative for concerted global efforts to be scaled up to ensure health financing, universal access and coverage, available, affordable and efficacious lifesaving commodities, strengthening of health systems and investing in preventive care and disease control.

Africa is more than aware of the importance of prioritizing health. This year alone, we have had several meetings on health within and outside the continent. The major ones being the Conference of African Minister of Health in Addis Ababa in April, the Special Summit on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria in Abuja in July and the International Conference on Maternal and Child Health in Johannesburg in August. In those meetings, we arrived at various outcomes and relevant indicators that set Africa’s health agenda which are all meant to feed into our post 2015-development agenda and Agenda 63.

China, as a trustworthy partner, is aware of the continent's health aspirations. It has followed Africa's health development agenda with keen interest, with great concern and with a helping hand ever since the first Chinese Medical Team set foot on the African Continent. Since then, Africa has benefitted and continues to benefit from Chinese generosity and contributions toward strengthening of Africa's health system by investing in the continent's health infrastructure, training of medical practitioners and providing the required equipment to enhance service delivery of Africa's health facilities.

China, as a consistent and dependable partner, is also conscious of Africa's ambition to greatness, peace and prosperity. She knows that to attain such greatness, the continent must invest in the health of its citizens. She is aware of Africa's pains, struggles and trials in lifting the continent's people from the mire of infectious and other diseases. She knows too well, how we have battled against those diseases and how far we have come

China knows about our efforts and our ambition to fight poverty and diseases. She knows how hard we have worked toward meeting our objectives and how earnestly we intend to move forward. China understands (for example) why we want to implement the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa (PMPA). She knows that when it is implemented, it would provide us the opportunity to produce efficacious, affordable and essential lifesaving commodities for the wellbeing of our people. Africa's knowledge that China knows and understands our desire to implement PMPA encouraged us to etch in the Abuja Declaration in July this year a paragraph that invites China and other BRICS to invest in the realization of the PMPA.

China is also aware that Africa has demonstrated determined and focus political will to reach the targets of the health related MDGs.

She knows that it is not likely that all the fifty-four Member States of the African Union will reach those targets. However, she is aware that with limited resources, with time constraints and unpredictability in international health financing, we have done well, though not considerable enough to meet the expectations of the health related MDGs

Excellencies, Distinguished ladies and Gentlemen,

China's presence on the continent and deep involvement in the development aspirations of Africa, its own history of climbing the development ladder and its yearn to assist other developing countries to reach the summit of that ladder, avail her the opportunity to understand the continent's needs as well as forge better, stronger and durable ties with Africa.

It is that spirit of understanding that enlivens our cooperation. It is also that spirit that has sustained it, and it is that spirit that will strengthen it.

We look forward to the implementation of the Beijing Action Plan (2013-2015). We also look forward to a more focused, result driven and action oriented declaration from this meeting.

Finally Excellencies; Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, let me end this statement by quoting the words of Nelson Mandela, who once said that, "Our human compassion binds us ... not in pity or patronizingly, but as human beings who have learnt how to turn our common suffering into hope for the future".

Africa and China are on that path-transforming our difficult past and present into a bright and prosperous future.

I thank you.