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UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia P. O. Box 3243 Telephone: +251 11 551 7700 / +251 11 518 25 58/  
Ext 2558

Website: [www.au.Africa](http://www.au.Africa)

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## **CARMMA Week and in country launch in the Saharawi Democratic Arab Republic**

**8-9 November 2018**

**Statement by**

**H.E. Mrs. Amira Elfadil  
Commissioner for Social Affairs**

## **Protocols**

On behalf of the Africa Union Commission, His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the Africa Union Commission, and on behalf of my Sister, H.E. Minata Samate Cessouma (Commissioner of Political Affairs who is here with me), I extend warm greetings to the Government and People of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. I would like to thank the Government and People of Sahrawi for accepting, to host the 2018 Commemoration and in-country launch of the Campaign for the Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA). I am also appreciative of the kind hospitality that has been extended to us and our delegation since our arrival.

We are here, because in fulfillment of the advocacy slogan of the global sustainable development goals(SDGs) that advocates that 'no one should be left behind', we as a Commission also continue to support all member states, towards ensuring, that each citizen has a place in contributing to Africa's 2063 transformational agenda. It is for this reason that we are particularly pleased to congratulate the Government and People of The Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic on becoming the 50th member states of the Africa Union Commission to launch the CARMMA Initiative.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

CARMMA is a major initiative of the African Union Commission (AUC) aimed at promoting and advocating for renewed and intensified implementation of the Maputo Plan of Action for Reduction of Maternal, Newborn and Child Mortality in the Africa Region. The Campaign was launched in May 2009 under the theme: "Africa Cares: No Woman should Die while Giving Life". The CARMMA campaign aims to accelerate the availability and use of universally accessible quality maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health services including sexual and reproductive health services, that remain critical to the reduction of maternal, newborn, child and adolescent mortality. In Kampala, Uganda, 2010, Africa Union, Heads of State and Government dedicated their focus of their Heads of State and Government meeting to the issues of maternal and newborn health, in recognition that Africa

was not going to meet the set Millennium Development Goals(MDGs) for maternal and child health. This very high demonstration of the continent's highest political has lead to a number of actions and and commitments including the revision and extension, of the now costed Maputo plan of Action(2016-2030), that have all been endorsed by our Heads of States and Government in 2016. The Commission evaluated the CARMMA campaign in 2017 and it is expected that the outcome recommendations of the evaluation will provide guidance to member states towards ensuring, that all preventable maternal and child deaths end by 2030.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**According to UNFPA,** more than 500 women and girls die in emergency settings every day due to complications arising from pregnancy and childbirth. Humanitarian situations can disproportionately affect children and all women of reproductive age including adolescents, where it is often the unavailability and lack of access to skilled personnel and safe services that results in morbidity and mortality. It is for this reason that good data on reproductive maternal, newborn child and adolescent health is vital to plan and deliver programmes to address the arising needs.

In 2017, the Executive Council of the Union endorsed the 2 million Health Care Worker Initiative, since then the Commission in close partnership with UNAIDS has been advocating for member states to strengthening their primary health care systems through a strengthened community health care worker system. Best practices on the continent have demonstrated that investment in strong community and primary health care systems results in reduced cost of overall health care to a Countries GDP. The Commission, therefore continues to advocate for member states to meet their 2001 commitment of committing 15% of their GDP to health. Improving primary health care through increased domestic funding, will advance the continent's progress towards achieving universal health care.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

Studies of humanitarian and conflict settings have also shown that on the average a child born in a humanitarian setting is likely to spend the first 20 years of their lives, living either as a migrant, refugee, or an internally displaced person. The first 20 years of life is an important part of the life cycle that prepares an individual to contribute meaning fully to development at the individual, community, national and global levels. The 2019, AU theme

of the year 'Of Refugees, Returnees and Internally displaced persons 'is an important one for member states that are faced with issues of migration and conflict and instability. I am therefore pleased that two of our Regional Economic Communities have joined us, IGAD and the ECA given that they have member states with citizens caught up in context that are linked to the 2019, theme of the year. The guns on the continent must be silenced! Our citizens must be free to migrate in an orderly manner and our citizens who are faced with internal displacement and humanitarian situations needs to have their basic rights to health protected. This is the Africa we want for our people.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**In conclusion, accept once again the highest congratulations on becoming the 50th member state of the Union to launch the CARMMA, Initiative. All preventable maternal and newborn deaths must end by 2030, No woman should die while given life! No one should be left behind!**

I thank you.