

Closing Remarks

Joint Meeting of Ministers of Health of the African and Caribbean Regions

Saturday, 06 September 2025
African Union HQ, Small Conference Hall, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

CLOSING REMARKS

H.E. Amb. Selma Malika Haddadi

Deputy Chairperson

African Union Commission

Honourable Ministers of Health from African Union Member States,
Honourable Ministers of Health from Caribbean States,
Your Excellency Dr Carla Natalie Barnett, CARICOM Secretary General,
Your Excellency, Amb. Amma Twum-Amoah, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS) department
Esteemed Partners and participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset allow me to reiterate what has been stated this morning, here in Addis Ababa, the African Union Headquarters, we are pleased to welcome our brothers and sisters, Excellencies the ministers from the CARICOM.

As we conclude this landmark Second Joint Meeting, I would like to sincerely thank and appreciate the spirit of collaboration, and unity of purpose demonstrated throughout your conversations.

This gathering has highlighted the vast potential of South-South health cooperation between our two vibrant regions, for a partnership built on expertise, shared experiences and a collective resolve to develop healthier and more resilient societies.

On behalf of the African Union Commission, I extend our sincere gratitude to my dear sister, **Dr. Mekdes Daba**, the Minister of Health of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and her team, for hosting this meeting. We also express our deepest appreciation to the **Caribbean Community** (CARICOM) and the **Health Development Partnership for Africa and the Caribbean** (HeDPAC) for your engagement in a fruitful dialogue and for exploring new approaches around this shared agenda of cooperation.

Your joint meeting reaffirmed that Africa and the Caribbean are connected by more than just history and culture. We share a common destiny.

While facing similar challenges, both historical and contemporary, our regions must continue to collaborate in developing shared solutions.

In a world where global health, economic and geopolitical competition that is not sparing global health cooperation, accelerating impacts of climate change, the rise of non-communicable diseases and the unfinished agenda of communicable diseases, pandemics, and emergencies, **cooperation is key.**

Investing in research, harnessing digital technologies, strengthening the health workforce and cooperating in international fora will enable Africa and the Caribbean to become pioneers of solutions and custodians of resilience.

Strengthening South-South health cooperation is also a strategic choice. By deepening partnerships and sharing expertise, we can build resilient health systems that truly embody the shared aspirations of our people.

Excellencies, investing in health is a political imperative and a matter of sovereignty.

We must diligently honour and increase our commitments by mobilising domestic resources, promoting cooperation, notably on access to medicines, and developing innovative financing models. Enhanced domestic health funding is not only essential but also crucial for realising both the **African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want** and the global Sustainable Development Goals.

Today's discussions have shed light on the potentialities of both regions. They have also allowed to identify the potentialities of their cooperation, if strengthened, deepened and anchored in complementarities and comparative advantages.

Cooperation between the African Union and the Caribbeans also means coordination of positions and mutual support in multilateral fora for a greater impact and influence of global health conversations and processes.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

As we look forward, we must acknowledge that a **healthy** population is the basis for economic and social progress. This meeting should thus act as a catalyst for maintaining our commitments. I, therefore, encourage our respective Ministries of Health, regional organisations and development partners to keep up the momentum we have established and build upon our successes.

Finally, let us transform this spirit of cooperation into ongoing political mobilisation. The 2nd Africa-CARICOM Summit taking place in this venue tomorrow provides the bedrock on which concrete cooperation will further be built. The results of this meeting must therefore be promoted at the highest levels of leadership to guarantee their successful and prompt implementation.

We have a significant opportunity to shape a healthier future for all our people, and the African Union remains prepared to help turn the commitments we make today into decisive actions we will undertake tomorrow.

Thank you all.