

**Talking Points\_ H.E Dr. Mekdes Daba**

**2<sup>ND</sup> AFRICA – CAREIBBEAN HEALTH MINISTERS MEETING**

**SEPTEMBER 06. 2025**

Your excellency At Adem Farah, deputy PM and vice president of Prosperity party.

H.E Ambassador AmmaAdomaa Twum-Amoah, AUC Commissioner for HHS

Excellencies, Ministers of Health of both African an Caribbean countries

distinguished delegates, and esteemed colleagues,

It is a privilege for Ethiopia to host this Second Joint Meeting of African and Caribbean Health Ministers, building on the foundation of the first joint meeting at the World Health Assembly and the historic CARICOM–Africa Summit. That Summit affirmed our shared commitment to write a new chapter in Africa–Caribbean solidarity.

Our regions, bound by history and resilience, have faced common challenges—most notably the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed fragile health systems and inequities in access to life-saving tools. Yet together, we raised a united voice for equitable access, proving the strength of South–South collaboration.

“Forward Together: One Voice, Shared Vision” captures the essence of this year’s joint meeting. For Africa and the Caribbean, it means transforming centuries of shared struggle into a unified strategy for health sovereignty and equity. Speaking with one voice allows our regions to influence global health governance—whether on pandemic preparedness, financing reforms, or equitable access to life-saving technologies. A shared vision anchors us in the conviction that health is not only a right but also the foundation for dignity, resilience, and sustainable development. By aligning our aspirations, we can move from fragmented advocacy to collective action that commands global attention and respect.

For our peoples, this theme is a call to strengthen south to south cooperation beyond declarations. Forward together means scaling community health innovations across both regions, mobilizing sustainable financing to reduce dependence on external systems to achieve universal coverage and accelerating SDG3. It also means building joint capacity in digital health, research, and local pharmaceutical manufacturing—so that Africa and the Caribbean are not perpetual recipients, but co-creators of solutions. A shared vision is ultimately about ensuring that every child, mother, and community, from Addis Ababa to Bridgetown, can access quality care and live with dignity.

Africa, through **Agenda 2063 Goal 3 – Healthy and Well-nourished Citizens**, and the Caribbean, through its **Regional Strategic Framework 2019–2025**, share the aspiration to guarantee health and well-being for all. Progress is evident—Goal 3 ranks among Africa’s top-performing areas, and both regions made major gains during the MDGs. But unfinished agendas remain: high maternal mortality, gaps in universal health coverage, rising NCDs, and climate-driven shocks. Unless addressed with urgency, these challenges will slow down our path toward **universal health coverage and SDG acceleration**.

Excellencies, this gathering is more than a ministerial meeting—it is a platform to act. Together we must:

- **Strengthen primary health care**, building on Ethiopia’s Health Extension Program and Caribbean PHC models.
- **Mobilize sustainable financing**, through fair global reforms and increased domestic investment.
- **Build climate-resilient systems**, ensuring access to essential medicines and shock-responsive services.
- **Invest in innovation and manufacturing**, pooling capacity in digital health, pharmaceuticals, and workforce development.
- **Speak with one voice globally**, to secure fair financing, equitable access, and Global South representation.

### **Call to Action**

Excellencies, the road ahead will not be easy, but history has taught us our unity is our power and today, that power must be exercised through bold, decisive action.

This gathering cannot end with words alone. It must mark the beginning of real, measurable progress. A robust Africa–Caribbean strategic health partnership is not just about advancing UHC and achieving SDG-3; it is about reclaiming our voice and asserting that global health equity will not be realized without the leadership of the Global South.

This is our moment not to agree in principle, but to act in practice. We must transform solidarity into concrete programs, shared investments, and coordinated positions that shift the balance of global health governance.

We call on Ministers to commit not in rhetoric but in action to making health a central pillar of our south to south partnership by:

- Speaking with one voice in global health diplomacy to secure fair financing, equitable access, and meaningful Global South representation.
- Delivering pharmaceutical sovereignty through joint Africa–Caribbean efforts in local medicine and vaccine manufacturing.
- Strengthening capacity to prevent and respond to pandemics, climate-related health threats, and the rising tide of non-communicable diseases.

Excellencies,

The world is watching. The people of Africa and the Caribbean are waiting. Let us leave this Summit not with promises deferred, but with commitments delivered.

Together, let us ensure health for all, resilience for our systems, and dignity for our people.

I thank you and ladies and gentlemen with this, allow me to thank his excellency Ato Adem Farah, Deputy PM of the federal government Ethiopia and VP of prosperity party, for gracing us with his presence, And I kindly ask all of you to join me in inviting him to the podium to deliver his remarks, give direction and officially open our meeting.

Thank you!