

COMMUNIQUE

“Reimagining Health Workforce Development in Africa for Africa’s Health Security”

A high-level side event on the margins of the 77th UN General Assembly
19th September 2022

We African Union Heads of States and Government, and Heads of Delegations participating at the Special Side Event, **“Reimagining Health Workforce Development in Africa for Africa’s Health Security”** at the margin of the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

MINDFUL that Africa, a continent of more than 1.3 billion people, continues to experience the highest incidence of public health emergencies annually.

DEEPLY CONCERNED by the detrimental impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic across Africa's health, security, social and economic sectors; **FURTHER CONCERNED** by the potential negative consequences of existing public health emergencies including the monkeypox outbreak and persistent pandemics of HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, maternal mortality, non-communicable disease, and impacts of climate change.

RECOGNIZING that Africa bears 25% of the global burden of disease and has only 3% of the world’s health workforce.

RECALLING the commitment by African Union (AU) Member States to meet the Abuja Declaration of allocating at least 15% of their annual budgets to the health sector.

NOTING the AU Heads of State and Government Declaration, EX.CL/1026 (XXXI) on Accelerating the Implementation of International Health Regulations in Africa.

NOTING the critical shortage of health workforce in Africa projected to reach about **6.1 million by 2030** which is made worse by the numerous public health emergencies, and challenges with securing relevant medical tools for their use.

RECALLING the AU Assembly decision, **Assembly/AU/Dec.649 (XXIX)**, that urged the African Union Commission, together with UNAIDS, WHO and other partners to rapidly recruit, train and deploy 2 million Community Health Workers across the continent when and where needed.

FURTHER RECALLING the AU Assembly Decision, **Assembly/AU/Dec.4(XXXV)**, that called on AU Member States to accelerate investment in health workforce development in Africa, mandated Africa CDC to champion health workforce development in Africa and established a Health Workforce Task Team to support this continental drive.

APPRECIATING the progress made by Africa CDC in contributing immensely to increasing the quality and quantity of African public health professionals through the delivery of tailored capacity building and strengthening initiatives on public health and leadership competencies.

WELCOMING the immense efforts of Africa CDC in responding to COVID-19 in Africa through targeted capacity building and strengthening initiatives, geared towards scaling up capacities in laboratory diagnostics including pathogen genomics, events-based surveillance, field epidemiology and risk communication among others.

WE, the Heads of State and Government hereby call for further investment in health workforce; and a new compact for health workforce development in Africa, which includes:

1. Redefining and building a fit-for-purpose health workforce

- *Call upon African Union through the Africa CDC to establish the health workforce task team to implement a compact for health workforce development in Africa as per the Assembly decision.*
- *Call upon African Union Member States to mobilize all sectors such as Health, Veterinary, Labor, Education and Finance to stimulate health worker training, deployment and retention.*
- *Call upon African Union Member States to collaborate and co-operate through compacting in order to agree on a set of evidence driven targets, align towards attaining the set targets through policy harmonization and promote accountability.*
- *Call upon African Union Member States to ensure all workforce are adequately remunerated, particularly community health workers and female workforce.*

2. Investment in the female health workforce

- *Call upon African Union Member States, the AU Commission, Africa CDC and partners to mobilize resources for investment in and promotion of women's optimal participation in the healthcare sector, including leadership roles.*
- *Call upon African Union Member States to establish a framework for investment in women health workforce, to ensure systemic and institutional recognition for women's contributions to the health sector and to ensure pathways for promotion and advancement in the workforce with attention to women's leadership.*

3. Accelerating private sector engagement and domestic financing

- *Call upon African Union Member States and partners to accelerate domestic financing for a fit-for-purpose health workforce to ensure sustainability and return in investment. Call upon partners including bilaterals, multilaterals, and finance*

institutions to mobilise more sustainable financing for health workforce investments.

- *Call upon African Union Member States to provide an enabling ecosystem for collaboration with the private sector to leverage their technical/financial resources and to ensure regulation and oversight.*

4. Transforming and strengthening monitoring, evaluation and learning for health workforce.

- *Call upon Africa CDC with support from African Union Member States and partners to design, develop and facilitate adoption of comprehensive metrics to evaluate progress and impact of the investments in health workforce*
- *Call upon AU Member States to document the socio-economic impact of investing in health workforce, and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063.*

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