



PRESS RELEASE

New report shows that a healthier Africa will further boost economic growth on the continent

ABUJA, Nigeria, 15 July 2013—A report launched today at the Special Summit of the African Union on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria highlights increased, targeted health spending as an essential foundation to greater economic growth and development in Africa. The report, *Abuja +12: Shaping the future of health in Africa*, published by the African Union (AU) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), reviews progress made since the AU's 2001 Abuja Declaration—in which leaders pledged to mobilize domestic and international resources for health and remove barriers to the AIDS response—highlights remaining gaps, and prioritizes next steps.

“Africa’s health and our prosperity are inextricably linked. 2001 was a turning point for Africa as African countries committed to take greater responsibility for the health and wellbeing of their citizens,” said Dr Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko, AU Commissioner for Social Affairs. “Since then, we have invested greater resources and efforts to address AIDS, TB and malaria which has produced exceptional results. We urge all AU member states to commemorate Abuja+12 with a renewed commitment to prioritize health and achieve their commitments and targets by 2015.”

The new report highlights five main recommendations for a healthier Africa: unifying leadership, generating innovative financing, making smarter investments in health, strengthening human resources and ensuring no one is left behind. Together, these recommendations aim to leverage health as a force for economic growth and social progress across Africa.

The report also highlights recent successes in the HIV, TB and malaria responses in Africa, including substantial reductions in the number of new HIV and TB infections and deaths from malaria. There is now much broader access to antiretroviral and TB medications and use of malaria control strategies such as insecticide-treated bed nets and indoor residual spraying are becoming more widespread.

“Twelve years ago, African leaders pledged to unite in addressing the health crises which were devastating the continent—and succeeded in making historic progress,” said Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS. “A renewed and bold commitment here in Abuja is essential as drawing from experiences in the AIDS response, we know that smart investments will save lives, create jobs, reinvigorate communities and further boost economic growth in Africa.”

The report cites a number of approaches pioneered as part of the AIDS response that can help improve returns on health investments. These include using investment frameworks to prioritize spending on the most cost-effective interventions; focusing efforts on people most in need; and reducing front-line health care costs by shifting tasks, where appropriate, from physicians to nurses, community health workers or other health practitioners. On strengthening health governance in Africa, the report notes that the principles that have been fundamental to the success of the AIDS response can be leveraged for the post-2015 agenda to advance coordination, innovation and commitment.

A central element of the 2001 Abuja Declaration was the commitment to allocate at least 15% of public expenditures to health by 2015. Over the last five years, health spending in Africa has risen by about 10% annually. However, spending is still nowhere near where it needs to be—just six AU member states (Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Rwanda, Togo, and Zambia) have achieved the 15% Abuja target, and an additional US\$ 31 billion is required to close the funding gap.

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UNAIDS

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners to maximize results for the AIDS response. Learn more at unaids.org and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.