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“Les défis des pandémies pour le développement de l’Afrique”

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Son Excellence Jean Ping,
Mesdames, Messieurs,
Mes chers amis,

Comme mon ami Pascal Lamy va parler en français, je vais faire ma présentation en anglais pour équilibrer le travail des interprètes.

INTRODUCTION

- When we explore the causes of Africa's under-economic development, it is common to mention slave trade, colonialism, difficulty in accessing sea trade or inefficient institutions. However, experts in health and economics increasingly agree that it is infectious diseases that play the largest role in Africa's underdevelopment.
- Africa is plagued by infectious diseases and pandemics. Worldwide, one fourth of total mortality is caused by infectious diseases. In Africa, 3 out of 4 deaths are caused by them. Africa, with 11% of the world population has 60% of people living with HIV.
- The outbreaks of H1N1 have shown that the world is better prepared than in the past to face pandemics. But we know that in Africa, countries and people are still highly vulnerable. If Africa remains poorly equipped to respond to AIDS pandemic of today, how can Africa be ready for the health challenges of tomorrow?

THE CHALLENGE

- As previous speakers have explained before me, we are at a particularly critical moment because of the current crisis.
- Pandemics have a devastating impact on the people and governments of Africa:
 - o 19 of the 20 countries with the highest maternal mortality rate are in Africa. Last year, more than 250,000 women died of complications during pregnancy and childbirth;
 - o 43% of deaths of children under the age of 5 happen in Africa;
 - o More than 300,000 children are still born every year with HIV in Africa when vertical transmission has virtually disappeared from most European countries;
 - o Pandemics affect the structure of our demography, killing children and young adults and affecting the Africa of tomorrow;
 - o Infectious diseases increase demands for state spending on health and welfare, and at the same time deplete the workforce and the tax base.

THE DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE

- To overcome this situation and the impact of the economic crisis, we have to make sure our response is not fragmented. We need a CONTINENTAL vision for how Africa will lead in the response to its pandemics. We need to transform approaches to health and development.
- AIDS has shown that we need, more than ever, to institutionalize the response in Africa, so it is owned and lead by national partners from government and civil society. How can we achieve this?
- First, we have to improve our systems for resource management. This means getting better at defining priorities and allocating resources to priorities; this means utilizing resources in a cost effective manner; this means using a better management framework for our health and social systems; this means preserving domestic finance for our health systems and response to pandemics;
- Second, we have to ensure that public services and in particular human resources are used effectively. We must train the right professionals, in

the right way, in the right quantities and retain them to serve the people affected by pandemics. In particular, this requires we pay them decently.

- Third, we have to redefine and reorient programmes for research and development to make sure they address Africa's health priorities; We must also harmonize our regulatory systems for research, pharmaceutical registration, clinical trials, to avoid useless and costly bureaucracy and duplication;
- Fourth, we must address trade issues, between Africa and the rest of the world, and within Africa. It is essential that access to commodities be permanent and sustainable. Too many Africans die every year because life saving drugs are not available. UNAIDS is working with Pascal Lamy and his team at the WTO to develop a continental vision on this specific issue.
- Fifth and finally, most of all, we must develop MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY. This cannot happen without the active involvement of civil society and dialogue with populations. We cannot hope to expand universal access to services from cities to villages without being accountable. Without mutual accountability, we cannot convince our own Ministers of Finance, donor agencies, innovative financing mechanisms to support our response and invest in Africa's health and social systems.

CONCLUSION

HIV remains the main cause of death for African adults. Without a new approach, there is no guarantee that we can keep all patients on treatment, prevent infections, support families and reach Universal Access.

The current crisis is a defining moment. This crisis is Africa's opportunity to develop a new response, to demonstrate greater leadership. This is Africa's moment. We need to engage all partners, from governments to civil society, and development partners, to make a decisive contribution to the health of current and future generations.

If Africa is to progress with its development, we need to transform health from being Africa's greatest challenge into being its greatest resource.

But we desperately need a pan-African vision on how to get there.

With the support and accountability of the international community, I place high hopes in the African Union to be its champion and its steward.