



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Health is Wealth.**

#### **Health Advocates Urge African Heads of State to Invest in Health.**

**25 January 2019 – Nairobi, KENYA.** In preparation for the Africa Leaders Meeting on Investing in Health, taking place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 9<sup>th</sup> February; and in the lead up to the 6<sup>th</sup> replenishment of the Global Fund in October, health advocates in Africa, under the Civil Society Platform for Health and the Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN) Africa, have met and emphasized the need for African governments to step up domestic resources for health.

Health advocates at the meeting have, particularly, underscored that African Governments must increase their allocation of resources for health to 5% of their GDP as stipulated in the African score card for domestic financing for health, which was endorsed by African Heads of State in 2018. They have urged Presidents to attend the Heads of State meeting in Addis Ababa to pledge and commit domestic resources for health.

The Global Fund, a 21st-century partnership, is designed to accelerate the end of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as epidemics. The partnership has contributed to saving about 27 million lives since its creation in 2002. 65% of Global Fund's programmes are implemented in Sub Saharan Africa. In the lead up to the 6<sup>th</sup> replenishment of the Global Fund, health advocates in Africa, have urged that a fully funded Global Fund along with increased domestic investments are needed to ending life threatening epidemics (AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria) and advance equitable access to health in Africa.

Hon. Stephen Mule, Member of Parliament for Matungulu constituency and chair of the parliamentary TB Caucus in Kenya and Africa, while speaking to the press said that a lot of progress has been made in defeating HIV, TB and malaria, yet a lot more resources are needed to scale up interventions. He lauded Kenya's focus on Universal Health Coverage which is one of President Uhuru Kenyatta's Big 4 Agenda saying it eases the burden of paying for health services. "I urge all African presidents to attend the AU summit in Addis Ababa on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and pledge to increase domestic resources for health" he emphasized. "Allocated resources should be used strictly for their intended purposes", he added.

Maurine Murenga, the Executive Director of Lean on Me Foundation, highlighted that health is a human right and citizens should access health care without suffering financial hardships. Universal Health Coverage should immensely benefit the people. "We urge African governments to increase public expenditure on health while reducing out of pocket expenditure as health care costs are driving households into poverty," she added.

Olivia Ngou, the Global Coordinator of the Civil Society for Malaria Elimination, said that it is totally unacceptable that people continue dying from treatable diseases. She called for political will, across Africa, to increase domestic resource allocation for health to save lives and to reduce the dependency on donor funding for health provision. She asked "what would happen to citizens should donors withdraw funding? Africans for Africa" she encouraged our leaders to think through the question and increase domestic resources for health, and support the 6<sup>th</sup> replenishment of the Global Fund.

Now more than ever, African Governments need to invest in people's health, and support the 6<sup>th</sup> replenishment of the Global Fund towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3 on ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all at all ages.

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