AFRICA HEALTH AGENDA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2017

THEME: TOWARDS A HEALTHIER AFRICA, PEOPLE, SYSTEMS & INNOVATIONS

Nairobi, Kenya   Radisson Blu Hotel, Nairobi   March 7-9, 2017   www.ahaic.org

REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH

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Africa Health Agenda International Conference Communiqué

Declaration on Accelerating the Achievement of a Healthier Africa
Nairobi, Kenya, 5-9 March 2017

We, the organisers, keynote speakers, panelists, scientists and researchers, leaders from government, multilateral agencies, the private sector, civil society, development partners, youth delegates, advocates for health and the media, came together at the *Africa Health Agenda International Conference* held in Nairobi between 5-6th (Youth Pre-Conference Forum) and 7-9th March 2017 (main conference) to discuss, debate and share state-of-the art scientific knowledge, evidence, policy and practice.

The Sustainable Development Goals provide a new framework for global health. The Africa Health Agenda must be a distinct part of this global agenda for change. We therefore focused on:

1. Generating homegrown solutions to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals across the continent.
2. Sharing scientific research findings, evidence and best practices addressing health and health systems in Africa.
3. Identifying and discussing gaps and challenges in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa.

Over the past five days, we have once again seen the power of homegrown innovation in addressing the unique challenges of achieving universal healthcare in Africa.

We understand that Africa's health system remains weak and fragmented due to decades of under-investment: with 11 percent of the world's population, it accounts for 24% of the global disease burden, has an emerging and high burden of infectious diseases, poor women's and children's health and the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases.

Whereas community based healthcare has the potential to contribute to better health outcomes, the gap between the community health and formal health systems remains wide. Fifty percent of Africans still do not have access to quality healthcare.

OUR CALL TO ACTION

The Africa Health Agenda International Conference 2017 has discussed these challenges under three threads: People, Systems and Innovation.

PEOPLE

1. <u>Human Resource</u>: We must employ the 'tools of our time' to formulate and implement appropriate policies to mitigate the impact of the significant health worker shortage in Africa. This includes the issues of skewed distribution, brain – drain and migration. We must tailor and innovate our health worker training to address the gaps in both health worker numbers and competencies

2. <u>Community Health Workers</u>: Community participation and ownership must be at the center of primary health care and universal health coverage, given the critical role that the community health system plays in linking households to the formal health system. We call on governments the civil society, and the private sector to formally recognise and make Community Health Workers an integral part of the formal health workforce.

3. <u>Our Young People</u>: We must meaningfully involve young people to co-create strategies, scientific approaches and investments to improve their health and implement policies that are youth-centered. Nothing for the youth without the youth!

4. <u>Strong, Visionary Leadership</u>: We must build our strengths in leadership, management and governance at political, technical and community levels.

SYSTEMS

1. <u>Universal Health Access</u>: We recognise that community-based health insurance, integration of national Health Insurance Schemes and use of Community Health Workers to increase enrolment are potential avenues for mitigating the challenges in access to national health insurance funds.

2. <u>Global Health Security</u>: We recognise that successful health systems require good systems for health. We must significantly increase investments in Primary Health Care as the backbone of global health security and universal health coverage. This must be supported through increased capacity for surveillance; strengthened systems to detect outbreaks with short reporting time; enhanced community engagement for early detection and response; and legislation of frameworks for epidemic response.

3. <u>Public, Private and Community Partnerships</u>: We need appropriate and robust legal, policy and regulatory frameworks that recognise and are respectful of the value

systems of state and non-state actors to create partnerships between equals. We call on governments, civil society and the private sector to engage in dialogue to build trust; we urge the Private sector to embed PPPs in the main business of companies as opposed to their charitable foundations; and the civil society to engage governments in translating evidence into action.

INNOVATION

1. <u>Evidence and Resources</u>: We must create the platforms that ensure that research and innovations are translated into evidence-based policy-making and actions. We call on governments in Africa to enact policies and legislation and to allocate the requisite resources to generate and use evidence.

2. <u>Technology</u>: We must harness the unlimited possibilities offered by technology in general, and particularly mobile technology and telemedicine, to address health challenges and achieve improved health outcomes. Governments must put in place policies and legislation for effective integration of technology in the health system.

3. <u>Scale and Sustainability</u>: We must be bold and have confidence in our home-grown, relevant innovations, bringing them to scale and creating more synergy. We must ensure more of our continent's great ideas reach the widest possible population.

This week we have created a blueprint for health in Africa. But a beautiful document is not enough. We call on governments to live up to their commitments and implement the global, regional and local instruments they have already signed. We too must do our part. Let us now go out and do what it takes to create lasting health change in Africa.