



## **A BRIEF REPORT AND HIGHLIGHTS ON THE THIRD SESSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF HEALTH.**

**SANDTON CONVECTION CENTER, JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA 9-13 APRIL 2007.**

1. **Participants at this conference included among others:** Ministers of Health, Health experts/Officials from AU Members states, UN agencies, AU Commission and CSOs. At the invitation of Kenya Human Rights Health Advocacy Network and Oxfam GB, HENNET through the coordinator, Ruth Charo, participated in this conference as a Kenya CSO observer.
2. **Why the conference?** This conference is held every two years. It provides an opportunity for African Health Ministers and partners to share experiences and best practices on how to improve the health situation in Africa. *The theme for this year's conference was: 'Strengthening Health Systems for Equity and Development'.* The theme was selected based on the fact that health systems are the roadmap to universal access to comprehensive health services.
3. **Envisaged outcome of the conference.** The main outcome of the conference was a Health Strategy for Africa and a Declaration on Health Systems Strengthening in Africa for Equity and Development.
4. **The major Reports that were considered at this conference included:**
  - a) Development of Human resources for Health in Africa.
  - b) Draft Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa.
  - c) Status of traditional Medicine in Africa.
  - d) Plan of Action on the Prevention of Violence in Africa.
  - e) Africa Health Strategy. Situational analysis of Health Systems in Africa, strategic directions, integrated approach and linkages, socio economic and political context of Health, M&E, Human Resources for Health, Traditional medicine,
  - f) Implementation Plan for the Outcomes of the Special Summit on HIV/AIDS, TB, and Malaria, Abuja, May 2006.

5. **Based on discussions on the above reports, the AU Ministers of Health committed themselves to:**

- In collaboration with partners, implement decisions and recommendations of this conference particularly those aimed at strengthening health systems and *providing periodic reports on the status of implementation.*
- Develop social protection systems aimed at protecting the poor and vulnerable in society.
- Implementing the continental malaria Elimination Campaign and launching of the same at national level.
- Implement programmes aimed at combating child illness, safe motherhood, and women's health in general.
- Urge member states to facilitate inter ministerial collaboration for an integrated approach to health.
- Implement the Africa Health strategy in collaboration with the AU, RECs, UN agencies, Private Sector, DPs, CSOs and others.
- Endorse the proposal to urgently establish a technical Committee to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa.
- Develop a mechanism to effectively implant the plan of action on prevention of violence in Africa including in situation of civil strife and armed conflicts.
- Make necessary efforts to monitor, follow up and reporting framework on the commitments of the 2006 Abuja declaration.
- Implement a comprehensive action plan to address all the elements of the health workforce crisis in Africa.
- Request the AU commission and RECs in collaborations with all stakeholders to coordinate the mid term review on the implementation of the plan of action for Africa Traditional Medicine 2001-2010.
- AU commission and RECs will promote international partnerships as well as follow up and report on the implementation of the outcomes of this conference, in particularly the Africa Health Strategy.

The AU acknowledges existing national, regional and continental policies, programmes and partnerships.

6. **What's in the conference reports and commitments for CSOs?**

- Recognition that Health is a human right.
- The AU vision of an Africa free of heavy burden of disease, disability and premature death.
- Advance women's rights and Equality in relation to health.
- Acknowledges that if the capacity of the private sector including NGOs is not fully mobilised, efforts to reduce the disease burden will be undermined.
- Health ministers will create an enabling environment for responsible and constructive community involvement, facilitate emergence of local NGOs and

CBOs and provide funding to initiate and facilitate efforts in underserved areas.

- Importance of community participation in monitoring health programmes.
- CSOs must be included in National programs.
- Promoting Public Private Partnerships in health.
- Implement the Africa Health strategy in collaboration with the AU, RECs, UN agencies, Private Sector, DPs, CSOs and others.
- Make necessary efforts (in collaboration with stakeholders) to monitor to follow up and report on the commitments of the 2006 Abuja declaration.

7. **CSOs can use these reports and commitments to:**

- Identify opportunities to influence policies and strategies at national levels
- inform own health programming
- Carry out informed advocacy work on health issues.

8. **Useful links:** [www.doh.gov.za/camh3](http://www.doh.gov.za/camh3), [www.health.gov.za](http://www.health.gov.za).