

AFRICAN UNION

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DECLARATION ON POLIO ERADICATION IN AFRICA: “OUR HISTORIC LEGACY TO FUTURE GENERATIONS”

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Decision No: Assembly/AU/Decl.2(XXV)

We, the Heads of State and Government of the Assembly of the African Union, meeting at our 25th Ordinary Session in Johannesburg, South Africa;

Bearing in mind the Yaoundé Declaration on Polio Eradication in Africa adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) meeting from 8 to 10 July 1996 in Yaoundé, Cameroon;

Recalling the Decision on Polio Eradication in Africa adopted by the Conference of African Ministers of Health (Tripoli, 2003), the Executive Council Decision on Polio Eradication in Africa (Maputo, 2003); and the Declaration adopted by the Conference of African Ministers of Health (Addis Ababa, 2009);

Acknowledging the unprecedented success of the "Kick Polio Out of Africa" campaign launched at the Yaoundé meeting and the historical opportunity that now exists to attain our objective of a polio-free Africa this year;

Noting with pride that the entire African continent had not reported a single wild poliovirus case for over ten months; that Nigeria recorded a greater than 90% decline in polio cases in 2014 and is very close to stopping endemic poliovirus transmission with no new cases reported for more than ten months; and all polio outbreaks in the continent appear to have stopped;

Recognizing that saving all future generations from the crippling effects of polio will help reduce poverty and fully complies with our Union`s vision of an “integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force on the global arena”;

Recalling the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration for Agenda 2063, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union in Addis Ababa on 26th May 2013, that places disease eradication and infant and child health at the centre of our efforts to eradicate poverty;

Recognizing that polio eradication efforts help build national and local health systems to reach every child with critical health interventions and services even in the remotest areas, and within most vulnerable populations;

1. REAFFIRM:

- a) Our firm commitment to the goal of global polio eradication, and help deliver a polio-free Africa as a historic legacy to children of all future generations;
- b) Our strong determination to sustain the current momentum in polio eradication efforts in Africa, and fully support and monitor the effective implementation of all polio vaccination campaigns in 2015 to reach and vaccinate every last child against polio;

2. CONGRATULATE all the Member States of the African Union, the Heads of State, the Ministers of Health, State and local Government leaders, community leaders, traditional and religious leaders, all health workers, the media, and civil society organizations for their consistent support for polio eradication activities; recognizing their invaluable role in achieving this historic success;

3. RECOGNIZE:

- i) The critical need to sustain intensive efforts in polio eradication to preserve our hard-won gains;
- ii) The importance of maintaining a strong disease surveillance system, to be able to detect and respond to any polio outbreaks following poliovirus importations, and to strengthen routine immunization coverage to protect all children;
- iii) The much wider legacy of the polio infrastructure and resources, and the critical role it can play in strengthening routine immunization, supporting broader disease surveillance and emergency health response efforts; the use of Polio infrastructure to tackle the Ebola virus in Nigeria is a living example of this legacy.

4. ACKNOWLEDGE the steadfast support and assistance of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) partners, international development partners and the civil society organizations for polio eradication in Africa, urging them to continue with the same level of support until Africa is officially certified as polio-free, and to help strengthen routine immunization efforts in the continent;

5. ENCOURAGE:

- i) the national and sub-national leadership of all polio-affected countries to provide direct and consistent oversight to their polio eradication efforts, and ensure that every child is reached and vaccinated;
- ii) All the Member States of the African Union to allocate additional domestic resources to strengthen routine immunization and disease surveillance initiatives, and closely monitor the full implementation of the 2013-2018 Polio Endgame Strategic Plan.

