

**To: African Heads of State during the AU Summit July 2010**

## **Call for Commitment to Development Goals and Budgetary Targets at the African Union Summit 2010, Uganda**

**Will the AU Summit 2010 taking place in Kampala, Uganda from 19 to 27 July ensure the budgetary targets for development goals become reality?**

A large proportion of the African population still lacks access to food, education, safe drinking water, sanitation, shelter, land, natural resources, employment and health care. Africa, many of whose states are failing in meeting the Millennium Development Goals targets, still battles with high maternal, child and infant mortality, HIV and Tuberculosis and related diseases.

A failure in achieving progress in health and education is linked to the neglect to address the social determinants of health such as education, employment, water, sanitation, poverty and food security. Increasingly, national efforts have focused on maximizing profits and implementing policies that have had severe effects on health and well being of the population. As a result public services often do not fulfill people's needs and past experiences such as structural adjustment programmes have led to cuts in governments' social budgets and increased health inequalities. At the same time huge investments have gone into defence, mining and other sectors with limited or lack of priority for sectors that determine people's health.

African heads of State have signed numerous development declarations including the Dakar Framework for Action-Education For All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments (2000); the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Other Related Infectious Diseases (2001); the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security (2003); and Sirte Declaration on Agriculture and Water (2008). In signing these declarations, African Heads of State made a commitment to the people of Africa to improve health, education, food security and reduce poverty. These declarations and decisions, amongst other strategies, commit governments to allocate at least 20% of their budgets to education, 15% to health, 10% to agriculture and 0.5% to water and sanitation. These are not ambitious targets; for example, the 15% target for health is realistic and some countries such as Malawi have reached this target.

During the 3rd Joint Annual Meeting of the African Union and Economic Commission for Africa Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in Lilongwe, Malawi, 29-30 March 2010, Finance ministers met to address progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in particular, realizing food security and employment. According to a pan African analyst present at the meeting, national delegations from South Africa, Rwanda and Egypt succeeded after heated debates in deleting any reference to budgetary targets for education, health, agriculture and water in the Common Position on MDGs and the conference report and resolutions. Their action calls into question the extent to which African finance ministers are committed to continental integration, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the declarations and resolutions of their own heads of state. It is evident that in countries where there has been an increase in domestic public funding for key social services, health outcomes have improved and therefore the development targets are a stimulus for action and should not be seen as a constraint on budgeting. The consequences of actions to delete budgetary targets in reports could result in a reversal in allocating the promised percentages of national budgets to health, education, food security and poverty alleviation, which could further damage the credibility of African leaders in the eyes of African citizens. Furthermore, it will weaken the power of African states to hold the international community to their promised target of 0.7% of gross national product to be allocated to development assistance and their commitment to double such assistance to Africa. Health and wellbeing should come before profit and we condemn any action that resists spending on development such as the actions taken by the finance ministers.

In July the Heads of State will be meeting during the AU Summit in Kampala, Uganda to discuss progress and state further commitments to these declarations with a focus on 'Maternal, Infant and Child Health and Development in Africa'.

This petition is based on the need to guarantee and ensure concrete budgetary targets will be adhered to and that governments need to prioritise the fundamental rights of the population above other obligations.

The petition also acknowledges and supports action taken by the African Public Health Alliance (APHA) and 15% Plus Campaign: 'Africa Civil Society Letter To July 2010 African Union Summit on Upholding African Health and Social development Commitments.'. This letter requests that the Heads of State should support the AU Commission in working with governments and civil society to monitor and report on health gains, and ensure a 10th year review of the 2001 Abuja commitments by April 2011<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> EQUINET Newsletter <http://equinetafrica.org/newsletter/>

It also acknowledges and supports the open letter to G8 'Meeting Promises for Children of Africa, our future', written by Civil Society Forum On The African Charter On The Rights And Welfare Of The Child (ACRWC) to urge them to meet their promises for external funding to African countries, noting that countries have failed to fulfill their promise for increased aid allocation to Africa. Similarly we are concerned and disappointed at the funding allocated to Maternal Health at the G8 meeting in June 2010.

**We are calling on the Heads of State to adhere to their commitments to development declarations and to ensure concrete budgetary targets will be adhered to!**

**We are calling on the ministers of the relevant departments affected to engage with their finance ministers to ensure that they undertake to meet the related commitments!**

**We are calling on civil society to put pressure on their governments and in particular the relevant ministers in different countries so that they undertake to meet these commitments!**

Please sign this petition following the link provided below to call on Heads of State, ministers of relevant departments and civil society to ensure the budgetary targets become real!! The petition will be shared with civil society organisations in Africa to be used as a tool to influence national governments.

[www.petitiononline.com/july2010/petition.html](http://www.petitiononline.com/july2010/petition.html)

**People's Health Movement**

Global Secretariat

*Health for ALL NOW!!*



**Community Working Group on Health**



**Centre for Health, Human Rights & Development**



**Regional Network for Equity and Health in East and Southern Africa (EQUINET)**

**HREP** - Health N Rights Education Programme

**SEAPACOH** - The Alliance of Parliamentary Committees on Health in East and Southern Africa