

DECLARATION ON THE CURRENT AFRICAN HEALTH CRISIS

- 1. We, the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, meeting at the Twenty-seventh Ordinary Session of our Assembly in Abuja, from 3 to 5 June, 1991, have recalled the pertinence of the Declaration we adopted in Addis Ababa on “Health Foundation for Development”.**

- 2. We bear in mind the expansion of health services, increase of human resources for health and success in the control of epidemics in the decades of the sixties and seventies. We are convinced that these development were made possible because member governments allocated substantial resources to health which was accepted as critical for development.**

- 3. We realize that the current economic recession, the debt crisis and the consequent financial constraints have resulted in significant reduction in health budgets in many countries. Similarly the negative impact of the economic crisis on the social and related sectors such as housing, water supplies, food security, education and employment have also aggravated the health crisis.**

- 4. We feel deeply concerned of the foreseeable trend in the health crisis due to:**
 - uncontrolled AIDS pandemic;**

 - resurfacing with increased frequency of epidemics such as malaria, cholera, plague, meningitis and yellow fever;**

 - insufficient organization of local communities for their full participation in health and development.**

- 5. In the light of the afore-mentioned observations, we therefore, commit ourselves to continue to strengthen national health systems and decide to resolve the health crisis by :**

- **adapting national health policies, strategies and action plans to community health priorities;**
- **ensuring that carefully planned and approved health care programmes are effectively implemented to the benefit of the clients;**
- **adopting and strengthening and organizational framework for the allocation of tasks and responsibilities to ensure effective implementation;**
- **strengthening health management structures at all levels and ensure their improved functioning;**
- **supporting the implementing institutions with adequate resources;**
- **training and making effective use of health and related manpower and ensuring their equitable distribution at all levels and ensuring that economic structural adjustment programmes do not impair their functioning;**
- **making full use of national expertise for planning, implementing and evaluating technical cooperation programmes;**
- **establishing mechanisms for ensuring that technical cooperation programmes are gradually absorbed into the national health development framework;**
- **strengthening national AIDS control and prevention programmes with particular attention to their management capacity and integration with other health programmes such as tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases, maternal and child health, family planning and health education programmes; and ensure that National AIDS Control Programmes focus their activities at the local community levels, thus improving programme effectiveness and sustainability;**
- **promoting a multisectoral approach to AIDS prevention and control by calling on different ministries such as planning, finance, education, social affairs, agriculture, industry and information, to work together with a view to reduce the pandemic's impact on development in general;**

- **establishing guidelines and procedures for self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the national health system at all levels as well as using simple community health indicators for monitoring progress towards health for all.**
- 6. We commit ourselves to promote inter-African cooperation in the field of health by adopting the following measures:**
- a) Facilitating people to people cooperation in health through reinforcing:**
- **community health organizations, community health and development activities and community health revolving funds;**
 - **community health initiatives and support to district health systems;**
 - **exchange of experiences and cooperation between health districts at country, regional and inter-regional levels.**
- b) Intensify their current cooperation with governments through:**
- **adopting people-centered, community-orientated policies, strategies and action plans and encouraging exchange of exchange of experiences and health information between countries;**
 - **promoting the exchange of students of health sciences, their teachers and other senior health professionals within Africa;**
 - **promoting inter-country cooperation in health sciences and technology especially cooperation in specialized and expensive tertiary care among African countries.**
- c) Accelerating and sustaining technical cooperation activities in integrating health and development through assisting selected districts to:**
- **undertake planning, management implementation monitoring of joint health and development activities with the cooperative support of the appropriate agencies and extending these experiences progressively to other districts;**

- **undertake major expansion of their revolving funds, through the provision and cost recovery of supplies of essential drugs (Bamako Initiative) or of other marketable goods and services of the health sector, as an initial step towards a national health financing programme;**
- **undertake a major effort in community-based home care of AIDS patients and other chronic health diseases.**

7. We direct our Ministers of Health to report on the implementation of this Declaration through the Secretary-General of the OAU by 1995.

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