

**AFCFTA-Anchored Pharmaceutical Initiative Ministerial Meeting on the endorsement
of the Centralized Pooled Procurement Framework and signature of its Legal
Instrument**

14 May, 2024 16 May, 2024

Mombasa, Kenya

Remarks by:

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Director, UNAIDS Liaison Office to the African Union

Good morning, Hamjambo, Salam, bom dia, bonjour !

I stand on existing protocols and bring greetings from our Executive Director, Ms Winnie Byanyima who is very keen on the outcomes of this all-important meeting.

UNAIDS is the global organization that has been dealing with HIV for the last 28 years and has been the lead UN platform that convenes and coordinates the collective UN response to responding to the HIV Epidemic.

The journey for UNAIDS in the quest for a strengthened continental capacity on local production started a long time ago and continues till date. Back in 2014, as UNAIDS EXD, Michel Sidibe strongly advocated for broader engagement with financial and industrial leaders for the local manufacturing of medicines.

- As the then head of UNAIDS, he insisted that “The time for Africa to break its dependency on foreign imports is now and that the local manufacturing of pharmaceuticals in Africa is an opportunity to develop a broader manufacturing and knowledge-based economy,”

Recently, Ms Winnie Byanyima, the current UNAIDS Executive Director remarked that, “It is important that we build our manufacturing capacity in Africa. There may be some in South Africa, a few in Nigeria and maybe in Egypt, but we need to pool together, produce our own medicines, and share the African market.

- That is something we feel strongly about at UNAIDS. We are working with the African Union and have some collaborations with China to promote local manufacturing. This is high on our agenda.”

Such a collaboration would boost technological transfer and knowledge sharing. With its sophisticated manufacturing skills, China can work with Africa to establish strong infrastructure and manufacturing facilities.

UNAIDS was involved with UNECA and ACDC in the work that resulted in PAVM, the partnership for African Vaccines Manufacturing framework. Parallel to that UNAIDS is a driving force in the tripartite work that facilitates collaboration and building solid

partnerships between the UN, AU and China. Both these work streams are the priority for UNAIDS in 2024 within the framework of our support to AMA.

A few other few examples of UNAIDS engagement:

1. Collaboration on strengthening the Africa group' position on equitable access to medical technologies in health emergencies and pandemics, learning from HIV response and ensuring the rights of PLHIV during emergencies.
 2. Collaboration in the implementation of the New Health deal. We were part of developing the Vaccine framework through PAVM and we support Africa CDC and member states in implementing the plan.
 3. We also are supporting and advocating through national, regional, and international levels on local production of medicines and diagnostics for HIV and other diseases.
 4. Advocate for UNAIDS / Africa CDC joint-leadership and support on developing Africa response to health crisis related to pandemics, climate change and humanitarian crisis, learning from the HIV response
 5. Currently UNAIDS supports the regional Research and Development programmes focusing on the mRNA hub in South Africa. Directly and through the People Vaccine Alliance, co-chaired by our Executive Director.
- We raise awareness about the importance of this hub and work with the hub, Medicine Patent Pool and others to enhance its role. We have been advocating for companies to share technology with the hub and donors to contribute to funding its activities.

In conclusion :

HIV, before COVID has illustrated the essential value of local production. Local production is essential for securing sustained supply of medical products even when there is a pandemic.

UNAIDS has played, and will continue to play, its key role in supporting regional manufacturing focusing on Africa with a particular attention to HIV products.

On Behalf of our Executive Director, Ms Winnie Byanyima, I want to wish you all successful deliberations and I reiterate UNAIDS' commitment to ensure that Africa has the capacity to secure its own health by producing and consuming locally.

I thank you.