



## AFRICA INVESTMENT SUMMIT ON HEALTH

CONCEPT NOTE

The Africa Investment Summit on Health is an African-led partnership among the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Business Coalition for Health, and the National Institutes of Health to catalyze substantial investment in local pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity. The aim of the partnership is to bring together businesses, governments, development institutions and philanthropists to significantly increase access to vital health commodities and supplies in Africa. The initiative will be launched at a high-level virtual summit on 20 September 2021, followed by a series of international events to galvanize businesses and leaders around the world to drive transformative action.



## BACKGROUND

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has exposed major flaws in humanity's capacity to effectively and equitably manage health emergencies. The pandemic has strained livelihoods, and the ongoing waves being reported across the globe continue to disproportionately impair development in low- and middle-income countries.

In Africa, where most countries are low income or lower-middle income, the pandemic uncovered the gross inadequacies and inequities in the continent's health-care systems. Leaders from the public and private sectors have called for a fundamental transformation in those systems to address the current crisis and prepare for future pandemics. They have highlighted the need for commitments at the highest level that are coordinated, connected, fast-moving, transparent, results-oriented, and equitable. In other words, a complete revamping of Africa's health-care systems is essential.

The scale and complexity of the challenges may seem insurmountable. Africa faces a double burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases. Infectious diseases account for at least 69 per cent of deaths on the continent; the Sahel region still has high fertility rates while some parts of the continent have already begun the demographic transition; and there remains a mismatch between domestic financing and the need for universal health-care coverage. Changing this narrative will require bold action to ensure that Africans have access to affordable, equitable and -quality health care.

One call to action that has gained the attention of the public and private sectors globally is the need for greater manu-

facturing capacity in Africa. According to the Economic Commission for Africa, the continent [imports over 97%](#) of the pharmaceuticals and medical equipment that it needs. The impact of this has been starkly exposed during the pandemic, in particular by the severely limited availability of COVID-19 vaccine supplies to African countries.

The Economic Commission for Africa, the African Business Coalition for Health and the National Institutes of Health are responding to this challenge. The three entities have formed a partnership with an ambitious goal: to deliver on a West African AfCFTA-anchored pharmaceutical initiative and thereafter to the rest of the continent. The goal is to create a blueprint for the local production of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment in West Africa, drawing on the lessons of the parent AfCFTA-anchored pharmaceutical initiative.<sup>1</sup>

The first important milestone in this journey is the Africa Investment Summit on Health, which will convene governments and businesses at the highest levels to develop a responsive framework that leverages AfCFTA and the African Medicines Agency. The framework will serve as a reference for changing the continent's health care systems and provide a foundation for the rapid transformation of Africa's health-care equipment and commodities sectors.

Building local production capacity requires long-term commitments from the public and private sectors in Africa, with a view to achieving the following key goals: the standardization of pharmaceutical policies and regulations in African countries to facilitate cross-border transactions; creating defined markets for phar-

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<sup>1</sup> Rolled out by ECA, in partnership with the African Union Commission and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, along with the following

countries: Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles and the Sudan.

maceutical products; matching financial investments; prioritization sector

workforce professionalism and welfare; consumer education; and creating

The summit will feature key findings from the second edition of the report, *Healthcare and Economic Growth in Africa*, which analyzed options for building resilient national health-care systems and fostering regional collaboration during and beyond the time of COVID-19 by leveraging innovation, AfCFTA and the African Medicines Agency. The report will also highlight business opportunities related to increasing access, affordability and availability within the health-care sector, with a focus on technological innovations in manufacturing, supply chains, logistics, and health services delivery. The highlights from the report will be followed by presentations on a detailed end-to-end value chain analysis of the products and services that are in high demand in Africa, the size of the markets for those items, and opportunities for private-sector investment. The facilitation of such business-to-business discussions is expected to align private-sector priorities with existing market opportunities so that public-private partnerships contribute to and shape health-care systems and outcomes across the continent.

The third and final presentation will be the official launch of a West African AfCFTA-anchored pharmaceutical initiative, which draws lessons from the parent AfCFTA-anchored pharmaceutical initiative launched in 2019 in 10 pilot countries.

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of summit are to:

- (i) Secure the buy-in and political will of governments and private sector partnership in the health-care sector;

the critical space for clinical research and development to ensure that the genetic composition of African populations are incorporated into clinical trials to determine the efficacy of the drugs that they consume.

- (ii) Catalyze the financial commitments and support from global, regional and local businesses that will be required to change and shape health-care systems and outcomes on the continent;
- (iii) Secure partnerships with development institutions for technical assistance and other inputs.

The summit will set the stage for concrete actions that will lead to the establishment and institutionalization of a West African AfCFTA-anchored pharmaceutical initiative. The initiative will draw lessons from the parent AfCFTA-anchored pharmaceutical initiative, which was launched in 2019 with selected pilot countries in East and Southern Africa. The West African initiative, which will focus on medicines and products to address hypertension and maternal, neonatal and child health, will adopt a three-prong approach, consisting of pooled procurement and local production, harmonized regulatory frameworks, and harmonized frameworks for quality standards.

## WHY WEST AFRICA?

There are three major reasons to roll out the initiative in West Africa:

1. The subregion has a combined population of over 411million people, living in 17 countries and territories, who bear a high burden of extreme poverty and disease;
2. There is an urgent need to change the state of affairs and invest in manufacturing and distribution capacity in the subregion and more widely

across the continent;

3. To address Africa's current lack of manufacturing capacity, it is essential to secure political leadership and commitment from governments, combined with the engagement of business leaders at the regional and global levels.

## **PARTICIPATION AND CONVENERS**

The African Investment Summit on Health will be attended by high-level representatives of African governments, business leaders at the continental and global levels, and partners from development institutions.

As the convening organizations, the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Business Coalition for Health and the National Institutes of Health will be responsible for managing engagement with the key stakeholders, with the primary goal of securing their input and influence to achieve the summit's objectives. The

## **SUMMIT FORMAT**

The summit will be held on an online platform and will consist of three presentations. The first presentation will be on the importance of the nexus between health care and economic growth and revamping the continent's health-care systems, followed by an analysis of value chains to highlight business opportunities within the health-care sector, and finally the official launch of the West African AfCFTA-anchored pharmaceutical initiative.

The summit is aligned with the call for action by African Heads of State and Government for improved access to

Establishing a thriving manufacturing eco-system in West Africa (and indeed Africa as a whole) will require strategic decision-making, foresight and determination to unlock viable investments and expertise to achieve a trans-formation at the necessary scale and depth.

summit will be held on the margins of the seventy-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2021, with further high-level engagement at the thirty-fifth ordinary session of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, to be held in 2022.

Drilling down further into the framework for the summit, established development finance institutions such as the African Development Bank and the African Export-Import Bank will be engaged as key financial drivers for local pharmaceutical manufacturing. Both institutions have a track record of making high-impact investments that drive sustainable development.

medicines on the continent, in response to the global shift in thinking that has been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. The partnership among ECA, ABCHealth and NIH will be aligned with other efforts to significantly increase local manufacturing and implement the robust tracing systems needed to support this vision.

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