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## African Leaders Taking More Interest in Global Fund

African leaders are taking a more active role in promoting the efforts of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to raise money to address the three diseases in the continent.

In April this year, Nigeria President Goodluck Jonathan agreed to help lead the Global Fund's efforts to raise funds. President Jonathan will co-chair the Fund's Fourth Replenishment alongside UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and heads of state from developed countries, emerging economies and the private sector.

President Jonathan met with Mark Dybul, Executive Director of the Global Fund when Dr Dybul visited Nigeria earlier this year.

In May, leaders of African countries met at a summit meeting of the African Union in Ethiopia and called on partners and supporters to mobilise fundraising efforts on behalf of the Global Fund. The meeting was held during the summit celebrating the African Union's 50th anniversary.

The Chairperson of the African Union, Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, asked the leaders to appeal to everyone to support the Global Fund's goal of raising \$15 billion in its replenishment effort.

"All of us should make the replenishment of the Global Fund a priority," the Prime Minister said.

A declaration issued by the African Union, and signed by heads of state, cited a united determination to defeat AIDS, TB and malaria.

Dr Dybul attended the meeting and urged the leaders to take the replenishment message everywhere by talking about the achievements African countries have made with the support of the Global Fund.

“HIV, tuberculosis and malaria are in retreat,” Dr Dybul told the African leaders. “You have it in your power to achieve what no leaders in history have had a chance to do: End AIDS, TB and malaria.”

Dr Dybul told the leaders that the Global Fund is their partner and servant, and will be a reliable friend as African nations seek to achieve the milestone of controlling the three diseases and removing them as a threat to public health.

In July, the African Union organised a special summit on HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria in Nigeria. The meeting was a follow-up to Abuja summits on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria of 2000, 2001 and 2006. The theme of the 2013 summit called for sustained commitment from governments and leaders across Africa to funding expanded and durable solutions to the three diseases.

Africa has the most AIDS cases in the world and receives the bulk of Global Fund financing. The Fund has enabled the continent to achieve tremendous progress to reverse the trend. HIV infection has been reduced by more than 25% in 22 countries and AIDS-related mortality has been declining. Some countries such as Ethiopia have reduced incidence of HIV infection by more than 50%.

Information for this article was taken from the Global Fund’s website and other news sources.

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