



CALL TO ACTION

Despite many significant gains in health during the past decade, including in maternal and child mortality, Africa today faces the highest burden of maternal and child deaths compared to other regions of the world. Across Africa, our nations' health care systems are not able to provide safe care for mothers and children. Health systems are further burdened by the rise in hunger across Africa. An alarmingly high number of people suffer from malnourishment; too many of our children are stunted, wasted, or overweight. Climate change has brought further challenges with an unprecedented number of people suffering from famine on the continent at this moment.

These realities cast a huge cloud on Africa's ability to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and especially SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being. Achieving universal health coverage for all in Africa is far from a reality. As called for by SDG 3, all people should have access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential health care, regardless of age, gender, or economic status. We recognize the principal of **health as a human right**.

It is time for Africa to focus urgently and seriously on building effective, rigorous and responsible health systems. Without such systems, all of our gains made over the past two decades in combating the major diseases that affect the most vulnerable and neglected segments of our population will be placed in jeopardy.

We believe the SDG agenda has ushered in a new era of partnerships and convergence around national and global issues. Strong and effective partnerships coupled with modern technological advancements make the time ripe to address the critical health system issues that are necessary to achieve the SDGs, as well as Africa's Agenda 2063. The solutions are known. Now is the time for us to act together to achieve the results we all desire for our citizens.

The agenda that brought us together in Kigali these past two days – building and strengthening African health system accountability – is critical to building the health system required for Africa to meet SDG 3. We express our gratitude to the **SDG Center** for initiating this meeting, in partnership with the **Government of Rwanda**.

After an intensive consultation over the last two days, we participants at the Conference agree on following **Call to Action**:

- (1) We call for **all** stakeholders in African health systems to champion the agenda for improved health system accountability. These stakeholders include public and private healthcare professionals, government officials, academic and research institutions, professional associations, members of civil societies, donor institutions and the private sector. As we go back to our countries, we are committed to launching further **inclusive national dialogues** with all stakeholders in order to review the existing health accountability frameworks and design national roadmaps leading us to stronger, more efficient and more inclusive health accountability systems in each of our countries. We note this saying as brought to our attention by delegates at the Conference: *“Anything you do for me, without me, is against me.”*
- (2) We especially extend our Call to Action to **health professionals** working at all levels of the health system, who often deliver healthcare under the most difficult circumstances, to demonstrate a special conviction to this Agenda and act deliberately and urgently to trigger the changes necessary to improve accountability in our health systems.
- (3) We affirm today that our **citizens** must be the focus of our accountability mechanisms. We must raise and listen to their voices and be responsive to their concerns about treatment and quality of care. It is essential that we improve **“health literacy”** among our citizens and enable them to obtain and understand health information, including through better use of **ICT** and the **media**. We ask the SDG Center to partner with us to develop **platforms for advocacy** for our citizens, that includes better usage of health data.
- (4) Our Call to Action further goes to our **political leaders**, members of parliament and other government officials to demonstrate **strong political commitment** to this agenda and to ensure that appropriate legal frameworks are in place and enforced. We call on you to help strengthen professional healthcare councils, associations and other bodies that can be empowered not only to impose **sanctions** for negligence, but also to provide **incentives**, including the opportunity for training and skills-building, to reward those who have shown the highest care and dignity for their patients. Finally, we urge you to **have zero tolerance for corruption** at all levels.
- (5) We make a strong Call to Action for governments and donor institutions to urgently increase investment in and support of improvements in **health system data capacity** in all domains, not only for better administrative, financial, civil registration and vital statistics data, but also for more **“citizen-driven”** data. We urge our political leaders to adopt and foster open data policies (consistent with patient privacy rights) that would make key health system information publicly, regularly and easily accessible for use by all stakeholders in the healthcare system, including our citizens.

- (6) We call for a comprehensive, **Pan-African health system accountability action plan** to be developed and adopted by mid-2019. We ask the SDG Center to work with our Ministries, WHO, the African Union and other stakeholders in this effort. This plan must take into consideration elements of accountability frameworks that already exist, as well as include strong measures of financial accountability and a robust monitoring, evaluation & reporting framework. We call on all leaders in healthcare to promote **national-level and pan-African level reviews** to assess the progress of the plans we are setting in place today, and to conduct all such reviews inclusively and transparently.
- (7) And finally, we recognize that more resources are necessary to achieve the results we envision here today. We extend a special Call to Action to all donors and financial institutions to support a **new Fund for African Health Systems** to promote SDG 3 in Africa by filling the health systems financing gap. At the same time, we also encourage **Governments** to increase the share of their own resources dedicated to health systems. And finally, we must work more closely with the **private sector** to support innovative financing and other solutions to the challenges we are addressing in this Call to Action today.