



**PRESS RELEASE**

**MINISTERS OF HEALTH CONSIDER DRAFT AFRICA HEALTH STRATEGY**

**Johannesburg, South Africa 12 April 2007-** As the African Union Conference of Ministers of Health entered its 4<sup>th</sup> day today at the Sandton Convention Center; the Ministers are discussing the draft Africa Health Strategy 2007- 2010.

The Strategy neither competes with nor negates other health strategies but seeks to complement other specific and detailed strategies by adding value from the unique perspective of the African Union (AU).

“The Africa Health Strategy is not replacing any other continental, regional or national strategies. It is a vision document that sets out the context within which Africa is saying ‘we want to meet our health challenges’. It seeks to propose various solutions, but not impose any”, said Advocate Bience Gawanas, Commissioner of Social Affairs at the African Union, as she presented the strategy to the ministers for their consideration.

The Strategy recognizes that Africa has previously set goals, in addition to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that they have committed to. It explores some of the challenges the continent faces in reducing the burden of disease, and draws on existing opportunities. It also highlights strategic directions that can be helpful if approached in a multi sectoral fashion, adequately resourced, implemented, managed and monitored accordingly.

Within the strategic direction highlighted by the Strategy are issues such as setting up a functional health system, governance, health policies and legislation, setting up coherent organizational frameworks, health resources, African Traditional medicine, strengthening partnerships, integrated approach and linkages, and the socio economic and political context of health. The Strategy also proposes monitoring and evaluation systems and a way forward that includes outlining the roles of the African Union, Regional Economic Communities, Member States and partners.

Once finalized, the Strategy will be formally adopted by the Ministers tomorrow, Friday 13 April. The theme of the conference is “Strengthening of Health Systems for Equity and Development in Africa”.