

AU Special Envoy for the African Medicines Agency (AMA) Embarks on High-Level Advocacy Activities



From Left: Honourable Michel Sidibé, H.E. President Julius Maada Bio of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Dr. Margaret Agama-Anyetei Ag. Director of Health and Humanitarian Affairs Directorate, African Union Commission, H.E. Prof. David Francis, Minister of Foreign of Sierra Leone on May 10, 2021 in Free Town, Sierra Leone.

The African Union Special Envoy for the African Medicines Agency (AMA), Honourable Michel Sidibé, has embarked on high-level advocacy activities on the ratification of the Treaty that will establish the AMA following his appointment on 26 March 2021.

Hon. Sidibé was appointed by the African Union Chairperson H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, following the Executive Council decision of February 2021 (EX.CL/Dec.1110(XXXVIII)) requesting the Commission to nominate an African Union Special Envoy for the AMA. “The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the urgent need for AMA to ensure equitable access to quality, safe and effective medicines and vaccines for all Africans,” noted Hon. Sidibé during his acceptance of appointment.

The Special Envoy has led high-level advocacy missions together with the Commission to member states that have signed but not yet ratified the AMA Treaty, in order to fast track the coming into Force of the Treaty. With the support of the Commission, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD) and the World Health Organization (WHO), the Envoy has led engagements with Heads of States and Governments and the Ministers in charge of Foreign Affairs to several member states from the month of April to July 2021. The member states include Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo,

Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Morocco, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia and Zimbabwe.

As a result, a number of the member states fast tracked the ratification of the Treaty, with the rest pledging their commitment to the same goal. The Republics of Algeria, Benin, Guinea, Niger and Sierra Leone deposited the instrument of ratification of the African Medicines Agency (AMA) while Egypt signed the Treaty following the visit by the Envoy. Additionally, Cote d'Ivoire, and Senegal have the ratification process in progress following the Cabinet approval.

As of September 20, 2021, seventeen (17) member states had ratified the AMA Treaty. Among these, eleven (12) member states (Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda Seychelles, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe) have ratified the Treaty for the establishment of the AMA and deposited the legal instrument of ratification at the Commission while five (5) member states namely (Cameroon, Chad, Gabon, Morocco, and Tunisia) have ratified the Treaty but are yet to deposit the instrument of ratification at the Commission. The African Medicines Agency will enter into force thirty days after the deposit of the fifteenth instrument of ratification of the AMA Treaty to the Commission.

The Special Envoy has also had the opportunity to advocate for AMA in a number of high-level advocacy virtual meetings including a round-table discussion on “the Impact of COVID-19 on Immunization Programmes and the need for the African Medicine Agency (AMA).” The meeting was organized on the margins of the high-level virtual meeting of African ministers of health on 8 May 2021 to evaluate the progress made in implementing the Africa joint continental strategy on COVID-19 organized by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC).

In addition, the Special Envoy advocated for the ratification of AMA at the African Union Member States briefing in preparation for the 74th World Health Assembly under the theme '*Ending this pandemic, preventing the next, building together a healthier, safer and fairer world*'. The Envoy continues with the advocacy of AMA in many other high-level forums.

The adoption of the Treaty for the establishment of AMA sets the African Union on a course towards establishing a second continental health institution that shall significantly contribute to the improvement of health care delivery and better health for all across the continent as envisioned in Agenda 2063. AMA will enhance the capacity of State Parties and AU recognized Regional Economic Communities (RECs), to regulate medical products in order to improve access to quality, safe and efficacious medical products on the continent.

The Commission encourages all its Member States to sign and ratify the Treaty for the establishment of AMA in the interest of public health, safety and security. The Treaty is available for signature at the Headquarters of the Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

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