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7. MR. AMPA TRESOR, TRAVEL OFFICER             TEL: 251 967 88 29 75
8. MR. MOKO BESIKE, TRANSPORT OFFICER          TEL: 251 967 88 29 70

EVENTS AND SPECIAL SESSIONS
FRIDAY, 19th AUGUST:
19:00 Dinner hosted by the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

SATURDAY, 20th AUGUST:
12:30-13:30 The Ethiopian Experience with Emergency Medical Services and the Health Development Army
18:00 Reception hosted by the WHO Regional Director

SUNDAY, 21st AUGUST:
12:30-13:30 The Ethiopian Experience with Emergency Medical Services and the Health Development Army
19:30 Stop TB

MONDAY, 22nd AUGUST:
13:30-14:30 The GAVI Alliance
19:00-20:30 Experience of China on the Universal Health Coverage and updates on China’s collaboration with Africa
20:00 Dinner with select Ministers of Health

CURRENCY AND BANKING
The local currency is the Ethiopian Birr. All local banks provide currency exchange services with an exchange rate that is uniform. Please note that it is illegal to exchange your currency on the black market – only deal with official banks. All major hotels have FOREX services.

HELP DESK
For any inquiries or assistance, please call the Help Desk (Mr. Yoqui, and Mr. Moko) on: (251) 0925 50 05 23 and 0929 50 05 22

WELCOME MESSAGE OF THE DIRECTOR
Dear Heads and Members of Delegations,

On behalf of Dr. Margaret Chan, the Director-General of WHO, I welcome you to the 66th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa, in Addis Ababa (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia). I would like to express my sincere gratitude to his Excellency Mr. Mulatu Teshome, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and to the Ethiopian people, for the hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for this meeting.

As we begin this session, I would like to re-iterate WHO’s commitment to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through Universal Health Coverage so that all the peoples of Africa attain the highest possible level of health. The WHO African Region’s strategic health transformation programme for 2015–2020 will guide the organization’s contribution to sustainable development in Africa.

I am happy to note that the Ebola Virus Disease epidemic which was one of the uppermost topics in the last two sessions of the Regional Committee has been successfully interrupted. However vigilance and preparedness by countries to deal with a resurgence of the disease and other public health threats should continue. We are at a time when several Member States in the African Region are affected by epidemics including yellow fever, cholera, Zika, natural disasters and other emergencies. I would like to urge all Member States to continue with the work to improve health security in the Region.

The Transformation Agenda of the WHO Secretariat continues to be implemented in the African Region. This involves strengthening human resources in the secretariat and improving accountability and transparency in our work. This exercise is currently underway in WHO country offices in order to align staff to the needs of the Member States.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Dr. Ebrahim Malick Jama who was the WHO Regional Director for Africa from 1995 to 2005. Dr. Jama passed away on 25th July 2016. He was an outstanding public health leader in Africa and around the world and leaves a precious legacy that inspires and guides us. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

The daily Regional Committee Journal will provide information on our daily programme of work, other matters of the Regional Committee and briefings.

I wish you a successful meeting.

Dr. Matshidiso Moeti
WHO Regional Director for Africa
WHO African Region’s strategic health transformation Programme for 2015–2020 will guide the organization’s contribution to sustainable development in Africa. It aims to ensure universal access to basic essential health services in all African Member States with minimal financial, geographic and social obstacles to health services delivery.

The programme has five strategic priority areas, including improving health security by tackling epidemic-prone diseases, emergencies and new health threats. Other strategic areas include driving progress towards equity and universal health coverage through health systems strengthening; pursuing the post-2015 development agenda while ensuring that the Millennium Development Goals are completed and tackling the social and economic determinants of health. Building a responsive and results-driven WHO secretariat is also a priority area.

To improve health security especially on epidemic-prone diseases, emergencies and new health threats, the programme sets a number of health outcomes and impact targets. For instance, the Ebola epidemic in the three most affected West African countries is targeted to stay at zero cases with routine health services restored by December 2016. The programme targets that by 2020; at least 35 countries in the African Region should have the minimum International Health Regulation (2005) core capacities established. Additionally, each of the 30 high priority countries should develop and implement national health preparedness and response plans for public health emergencies by 2017.

To achieve equity and universal health coverage, the transformation programme targets that by 2020, the number of countries with high out-of-pocket payment as a percentage of total health expenditure should reduce from 37% to 18%. Additionally, the number of countries where access to skilled birth attendants is over 75% should increase from 11% to 35%. The number of countries with adolescent birth rate below 45/1000 should also increase from 5% to 30%. The programme further targets to increase the number of countries with the rate of first postnatal visits within two days of delivery from 7% to 35%. The coverage of the 3rd dose of the Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis (DTP3) vaccine should increase from 75% to 90% by 2020. New HIV infections and TB incidence are targeted to reduce by 75% and 20% respectively. Other targets are a reduction in malaria incidence by at least 40% in 43 malaria endemic countries; complete elimination of morbidity due to schistosomiasis, soil transmitted helminthiasis and trachoma; and a 10% reduction in the prevalence of raised blood pressure relative to the 2014 estimates.

Member States, development partners and stakeholders’ involvement, commitment and investment in building robust and resilient national health systems will be critical to the success of this programme.