African Health Policy Alliance

African Summit on Preventive Health

National Healthcare System Sustainability and the Role of Preventive Care in Africa

1. Introduction

Africa's health systems are approaching a critical tipping point. Healthcare costs in the African and Middle Eastern regions are projected to rise by 11.3% in 2026, implying they will far outpace GDP growth and place immense strain on already burdened national budgets[1]. All while the occurrence of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) has surged from 24% to 37% of all deaths on the continent between 2000 and 2019. Tuberculosis continues to generate an estimated 2.5 million new cases per year in Africa, disproportionately affecting economically active populations and deepening cycles of poverty[2]. Simultaneously, the 2025 withdrawal of USAID funding has left up to 95 million people without access to basic care, exposing the structural vulnerability of systems reliant on external financing[3].

The concurrent pressures of escalating costs, rising NCD and infectious disease burdens, demographic change, accelerating urbanisation and the mounting health impacts of climate change lead to one unambiguous conclusion: reactive, treatment-centred health systems are fiscally and epidemiologically unsustainable. The evidence is equally clear regarding the alternative. The World Health Organisation estimates that every US$1 invested in preventive health returns US$7 in reduced treatment costs and productivity gains[4]. Yet across Africa, preventive care remains chronically underinvested and institutionally marginalised in national budgeting processes. This initiative aims to stimulate the policy dialogue and focus attention on Preventive Care in Africa as a cornerstone of both improved public health outcomes and long-term fiscal sustainability.

2. Importance of the Summit

The summit seeks to produce actionable outcomes, including a regional strategy on Preventive Health for Africa, to accelerate health system strengthening and promote health financing models that position prevention as a productive investment in national budgeting processes. Central to this objective is the recognition that investing in preventive care is not merely a public health imperative but also a pillar of fiscal sustainability and human capital development: a healthier, more productive workforce reduces long-term absenteeism, disability, and economic inactivity, thereby directly strengthening human capital and national economic output.

We aim to achieve this through multi-stakeholder participation, specifically engaging the Chairpersons of the Health and Finance Portfolio Committees of National Parliaments, alongside academics, clinicians, researchers, private sector partners, international development partners, and civil society organisations, including NGOs and community groups.

3. Key Areas for Discussion

The summit will focus on several interrelated policy areas already identified in the draft programme. These include universal health coverage, health equity and access, innovative and sustainable health financing, integrated primary healthcare funding, digital health and health informatics, and the role of prevention in strengthening workforce productivity and human capital development. It will also examine how prevention can be better reflected in budgeting processes, regulatory frameworks, and national development agendas.

---

[1] WTW (2026); https://www.wtwco.com/en-gb/insights/2025/10/2026-global-medical-trends-survey

[2] WHO (2025); https://www.afro.who.int/health-topics/tuberculosis-tb

[3] Oxfam (2026); https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/issues/making-foreign-aid-work/what-do-trumps-proposed-foreign-aid-cuts-mean/

[4] WHO (2021); Saving lives, spending less: the case for investing in noncommunicable diseases

4. The Value of Your Participation

A key value of participation is the opportunity for policymakers and senior officials to help shape an actionable regional policy conversation. Participating countries will be invited to contribute case studies, highlight national reforms and innovations, and engage with peers on practical approaches to prevention governance and financing. The summit is designed to support cross-regional learning and policy diffusion across African health systems, while also elevating prevention within broader state decision-making.

For Ministers of Finance, Ministers of Health and Chairpersons of Finance and Health Portfolio Committees, participation offers several strategic benefits. It provides a platform to elevate national priorities, contribute to a continental agenda on prevention, engage with fellow policymakers and parliamentary leadership, and strengthen the case for prevention as a productive public investment. It also offers an opportunity to build alliances across sectors and countries around reforms that can improve health outcomes while supporting fiscal sustainability.

5. Programme Structure

Phase	Timing	Key Activities
Phase I	**14 July 2026, 4 August 2026 and end September 2026. Latter precise date to be confirmed.**	Three 1.5-hour online preparatory dialogues on: • Fiscal context-setting • Regional best-practice scenarios • Country snapshot presentations The goal is to align thematic priorities ahead of Summit.
Phase II	**29-30 October 2026**	Main in-person Summit: • Keynotes • Roundtables • Policy panels • Country case study presentations • Drafting and signing of the African Declaration on Preventative Health.
Phase III	**Post-Summit**	• Official summit report with country case studies and policy recommendations • Country-specific fiscal and health impact assessments • Formal launch of the Preventive Health Expert Group.

6. Expected Outcomes

Following the conclusion of the Summit, the “African Declaration on Preventive Health” will be published. This will be the official summit report presenting the conclusions of the Summit, country-specific case studies and policy recommendations. Moreover, a follow-up mechanism to support continuity after the event will be established. The broader intention is to help translate political commitment into implementable action by clarifying priorities, identifying workable financing approaches, and strengthening accountability for delivery.

7. Organizers

The African Health Policy Alliance is a South African platform dedicated to strengthening evidence-based health policymaking and fostering cross-regional dialogue among decision-makers. Operating at the intersection of public health, fiscal sustainability, and governance reform, the Alliance aims to promote policies that enhance long-term health system resilience while supporting economic development objectives.

By convening this summit, the Alliance seeks to ensure that African health systems stay financially sustainable, socially responsive, and resilient amid future demographic and epidemiological changes.