African Health Policy Alliance

CAPE TOWN DECLARATION ON PREVENTIVE HEALTH

AFRICAN SUMMIT ON PREVENTIVE HEALTH

Preventive Health: National Healthcare System Sustainability and the Role of Preventive Health

Sun Square City Bowl Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa,

29–30 October 2026

The African Summit on Preventive Health was held on 29–30 October 2026. The Summit convened 64 members of parliamentary committees who are responsible for health and budget within their own nations, as well as delegates from 13 African countries (Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Tanzania, The Gambia, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia, Botswana, Ghana and South Africa). Other participants at the summit included representatives from China, the United Kingdom and Switzerland, alongside development partners, technical experts, the private sector, researchers, academics and Civil Society Organisations who shared experiences and contributed to the drafting and adoption of the Cape Town Declaration on Preventive Health.

The Summit was organised under the theme “Preventive Health: National Healthcare System Sustainability and the Role of Preventive Health”.

The Summit provided a platform for African parliamentarians and other stakeholders to get acquainted with the pivotal role of preventive health as a cornerstone of resilient, responsive and sustainable health systems and socio-economic transformation in the African region. It established a platform for engagement, reflection and constructive dialogue on policy, funding, programme and partnership priorities, enabling the exchange of country perspectives on preventive health as a driver of resilient and sustainable health systems.

The Summit was hosted by the African Health Policy Alliance (AHPA), with technical support from the following partners: Network of African Parliamentary Committees of Health (NEAPACOH) Secretariat, Partners in Population and Development Africa Regional Office (PPD ARO), African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) and WACI Health. Speakers included participants from the University of Cape Town; the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change; the University of Basel; Afrocentric and African Health Policy Alliance.

WHEREFORE:

WE, the parliamentarians and other stakeholders convened at the African Summit on Preventive Health under the theme “National Healthcare System Sustainability and the Role of Preventive Health in Africa”,

COGNISANT that the health status of the people of Africa remains a matter of concern, with unacceptably high morbidity and mortality rates, especially among children, young people and women, as a result of limited access to quality health services;

COGNISANT that maternal health is a key component in preventive health;

COGNISANT that preventive health involves taking proactive measures to detect health issues early, reduce disease risks and maintain overall well-being before symptoms appear;

COGNISANT that the social determinants of health — such as income, housing, education, transportation and food security—have a direct bearing on whether, when and how people access preventive health care services;

AWARE that preventive health is an investment in human capital and social and economic development, contributing to the full realisation of human potential and significantly promoting and protecting human rights and dignity, as well as empowering all people;

NOTING that promotive and preventive health services, including vaccination, are as important as curative, rehabilitative and palliative services, and that they therefore need to be safe, accessible and affordable without exposing users to financial hardship;

NOTING that the health challenges facing Africa are vast, but so too are the opportunities for meaningful change through collective commitment and leadership;

UNDERSCORING the need to build strong, resilient, functional and well-governed health systems, essential for quality service delivery;

ACKNOWLEDGING that parliamentarians are central architects of the health ecosystem and play a pivotal role in resetting the continent's health agenda to strengthen health systems for emergency response, equity, resilience and sustainability in the context of achieving the aspirations of Agenda 2063;

HEREBY adopt and commit ourselves to this Cape Town Declaration on Preventive Health on this 30th day of October 2026, and declare our commitment to the following:

Under Resilient, Responsive and Sustainable Health Systems

1. Mainstream prevention, health promotion and early intervention into national planning and development frameworks, recognising that healthier populations strengthen human capital, productivity, community resilience and inclusive socio-economic development.
2. Promote evidence-based informed policies and environments that enable individuals and communities to make healthier choices and adopt healthier behaviours - for example, in relation to alcohol and tobacco use and the consumption of sugar-

sweetened beverages and salt - throughout the life course, to support immediate and long-term population health.

3. Improve preparedness for epidemics, climate-related health risks and other shocks by including science education as a foundation for preventive health, and linking routine primary care with surveillance, laboratory capacity, emergency preparedness and resilient supply chains.
4. Promote preventive health in the workplace, recognising workplaces as underused entry points for preventive care.

Under Sustainable Health Financing

1. Integrate clearly costed preventive health priorities into national development plans, health strategies, medium-term expenditure frameworks and annual budgets, and improve the alignment between policy commitments, budget allocations, timely disbursement and implementation.
2. Strengthen domestic resource mobilisation for health while improving efficiency, equity, transparency, cost effectiveness and protecting priority preventive and primary healthcare services during periods of fiscal constraint and external financing volatility.
3. Promote regular, evidence-based dialogue between ministries of health, ministries of finance, parliaments and other relevant agencies to ensure that health priorities are reflected in fiscal planning and realistic, sustainable health plans.
4. Support financing arrangements that reduce financial hardship, including pooled and predictable funding, and align purchaser and provider incentives with preventive health needs.

Under African-Led Implementation, Policy and Governance

1. Translate commitments into country-owned plans with clear responsibilities, realistic timelines and measurable targets, supported by stronger parliamentary legislation and oversight, as well as meaningful community participation, to embed evidence-based approaches.
2. Promote South–South learning and exchanges of practical African experience through regional economic communities, parliamentary networks, public health institutions and peer-learning platforms.
3. Strengthen implementation at subnational and community levels by involving local authorities, frontline workers, civil society, professional bodies, traditional and community leaders, young people and affected communities in the design and review of preventive programmes.

Under Innovation, Data and Accountability

1. Improve the interoperability of health information systems, strengthen disease surveillance and use disaggregated monitoring data to improve programme effectiveness.

2. Advance responsible digital health innovation, with safeguards for privacy and equity, to inform policy, financing and service delivery.

3. Promote health technology assessment, burden-of-disease evidence, programme evaluation and context-appropriate economic analysis to inform priority-setting while safeguarding equity and access.

Under Partnerships for Resilient Health Systems

1. Build coordinated partnerships among governments, parliaments, communities, regional institutions, civil society, academia, development partners and the private sector.

2. Build and support durable partnerships grounded in national priorities and mutual accountability, bringing together governments, parliaments, technical experts, regional and continental institutions, civil society, communities, academia, development partners and the private sector, where appropriate.

Under Implementation and Accountability

1. Establish an Expert Group on Preventive Health with relevant regional and multidisciplinary expertise to support implementation, evidence exchange, peer learning and progress reporting.

2. Enhance regional parliamentary coordination by utilising regional legislative networks (EAC, SADC, ECOWAS, NEAPACOH, IPU, CPA, etc.) to develop and harmonise laws and policies, strengthen accountability mechanisms, and monitor the implementation of the Declaration across Africa.

3. Review and report on progress regularly, preferably annually, through existing national and regional mechanisms, ensuring public transparency and parliamentary oversight.

In the same spirit, the participants in the African Summit on Preventive Health collectively and individually express their sincere appreciation and gratitude to the people and Government of the Republic of South Africa, especially the Parliament of South Africa, the African Health Policy Alliance and its partners, for the successful organisation and hosting of the Summit.

We call upon African governments, parliaments, continental and regional bodies, communities and partners to provide sustained political leadership, financing and accountability to translate this Declaration into practical action that improves health outcomes and advances Africa's sustainable development.

– End –