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7th March 2009

***The Co-Chairs
International Task Force on
Innovative Financing for Health Care Systems***

***Rt. Hon Gordon Brown MP, Prime Minister, United Kingdom, 10 Downing Street, London, SW1A 2AA,
United Kingdom***

***Robert B Zoellick, President, World Bank, 1818 H. Street, NW, Washington D.C. 20433, United States of
America***

Dear Co-Chairs:

The launch of the International Health Partnership and related initiatives (IHP+) remains a significant milestone in the history of global health, especially as it relates to improving the effectiveness of overseas development assistance (ODA) and mitigating the unintended negative and fragmentary effect of multiple partners and players on the health care systems of lower and middle income countries. It builds on the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for action to strengthen aid coordination and promote country ownership, leadership and alignment. The initial efforts and progress of the IHP+ were obvious at its recent Ministerial Review where southern national governments and their civil society were at the same global agenda setting table as equal partners with equal voices. These initial gains are of great import. They are indeed the initial steps on the path of the bold changes we all must make if global health is to be a shared agenda with mutual accountability.

We further welcome the bold vision and opportunity presented by the International Task Force on Innovative Financing for Health Systems, its bold aim to mobilize resources in support of strengthened health care systems in lower and middle income countries, most of whom lag seriously behind on their progress towards the achievement of almost all the health MDGs. We note that the working groups of the Task Force have sought to identify bottlenecks to systems strengthening and is in the process of proposing various initiatives for expansion or creation in its search for 'innovations' in health care financing.

Expanding and strengthening the space for the leadership of national governments, regional institutions and civil society organizations is critical, if the success is to be owned, programmes and resources harmonized and aligned in the context of domestic financing and comprehensive, integrated national health and development plans. Strengthening the capacity of LMIC to expand and transparently manage their own domestic resources within the international aid architecture is of the essence, if these efforts are to be equitable and achieve their intended outcomes, sustainably and without aid dependence. Country alignment, harmonization and ownership remain critical to the success of these initiatives as much as fundamental changes in engagement behaviours including advocacy that drive innovations, resource mobilization, their allocation and disbursement.

Dr. Lola Dare (CEO/Executive Secretary)

Principal Staff

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Regional and country dialogue as well as carefully conducted feasibility and operational research must guide the conclusions of this work and the adoption of any or a cocktail of financing options. Our final agenda must retain the spirit of the IHP+, ownership, alignment and leadership, promoting greater coordination and strengthening domestic resources within the larger context of international financing for health care systems.

We therefore urge the Co-Chairs to ensure that the Task Force proactively ensures the space for this true engagement, dialogue and understanding before the global adoption of any of the financing opportunities being proposed including but not limited to the Currency Transaction Tax. Regional consultations with national governments as well as CS providing the options and opportunities of each financing options are required urgently to ensure that they too can contribute their content and context to the debate. It also provides a platform to seek modalities by which these can also engage their own Ministries of Finance, health and planning in ways that domestic financing could possible respond to and enables them to maximize the potential these additional resources can provide within comprehensive and equitable health and development planning.

We wish the task force very fruitful deliberations and look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely

Dr. Lola Dare
Chief Executive Officer/Executive Secretary
African Council for Sustainable Health Development (ACOSHED)

cc: Rt. Hon Alistair Darling MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer
Rt. Hon Douglas Alexander MP, Secretary of State for International Development
Dr. Margaret Chan, Director General, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland
Task Force Secretariat (Robert J Fryatt , Nicole Klingen, R Ward, J Hsu)