



African Union discusses health issues

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia, May 5, 2009/ABC Television-Africa — Experts in the domain of health have started brainstorming today, Monday 4 May 2009, ahead of the Fourth African Union Conference of Ministers of Health, scheduled to take place on 7 and 8 May 2009, at the headquarters of the AU in Addis Ababa,

Ethiopia.

The conference of Ministers of Health is aimed at reviewing the commitments and decisions taken by the ministers at the Johannesburg (South Africa) meeting in 2007. They will identify the different actions to be taken towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the area of health known as (MDGs 4 and 5). According to the Commissioner for Social Affairs of the AU, Advocate Bience Gawanas, if no fast action is taken, Africa might not be able to attain the targeted goals.

Meanwhile, the issue of swine flu was added to the agenda of the health Experts during today's opening ceremony, due to the current realities on the ground. African Union member States were called upon to join force to envisage prevention strategies that will help fight the virus as well as getting the drugs and treatment timely to its population when necessary.

Other issues to be considered during the Experts meeting includes: HIV-AIDs, poliomyelitis, malaria, and tuberculosis.

Meantime, Commissioner Gawanas recalled that the fight against these pandemics should not be done in faction but holistically while putting all diseases on the same scale. This, she said will help to obtain good diagnostics results regardless of the level of contamination of the disease.

The Commissioner also underscored the need for the Experts to reflect on the financing of the health sector in Africa.