Wearing different political hats but united by a shared vision, 45 African health ministers and over 100 key stakeholders gathered on February 13, 2025, in Addis Ababa to map out Africa's health future. Meeting under the Ministerial Executive Leadership Programme (MELP), the ministers emphasized building a strong coalition with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) to bolster health security on the continent.

Opening the session, Africa CDC Director General Dr. Jean Kaseya underscored the urgency of resilient health systems and the MELP's three pillars: reimagining primary health care, advancing universal health coverage, and fostering multi-sectoral emergency response collaboration.

"Health must be positioned as a matter of economic and continental security," Dr. Kaseya stated, urging ministers to increase domestic financing rather than rely on external funders amid a 40% rise in disease outbreaks between 2022 and 2024.

Data presented by Dr. Ngashi Ngongo, Africa CDC's Principal Advisor, highlighted how multiple simultaneous outbreaks are straining fragile national health systems, especially in conflict-affected regions such as the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Speakers like Angola's Health Minister Dr. Silvia Lutucuta stressed a One Health approach that integrates environmental, sanitation, and governance sectors to respond effectively to outbreaks like cholera.

Equatorial Guinea's Dr. Mitoha Ondo'o Ayekaba stressed tailoring emergency responses to local contexts, drawing lessons from pre-COVID decentralization efforts that enabled faster crisis management.

Nigeria's Professor Muhammad Ali Pate highlighted political commitment as crucial for resilient, equitable health systems, advocating partnerships across governments, NGOs, and communities to withstand shocks.

With foreign health funding declining sharply—from $80 billion in 2021 to an expected $24 billion in 2025—ministers debated innovative domestic financing models. Côte d'Ivoire's Dr. Pierre N'gou Dimba shared efforts to extend health insurance to informal workers through tax-based schemes, while Ethiopia's Dr. Mekdes Daba called for bold investments in the health workforce.

Former Botswana Health Minister Dr. Joy Phumaphi warned of funding shortfalls

threatening malaria control and urged ministers to leverage emergency funds and engage directly with donor governments to mitigate crises.

The gathering concluded with calls for stronger governance, strategic organization, and concrete follow-up to ensure health policies translate into measurable improvements.

As Africa faces unprecedented health challenges, the MELP forum has set a determined course: forging partnerships, mobilizing resources, and building resilient systems that will secure the continent’s health future.