

**REMARKS BY HER EXCELLENCY, AMBASSADOR AMINA S. ALI,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AFRICAN UNION MISSION  
ON THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD**

TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2009

3:30 PM

Honorable Congressman Donald Payne,  
Members of the House of Representatives and Senate,  
Members of the US Government,  
Excellencies Ambassadors and member of Diplomatic Corps,  
Distinguished Co partners and Representatives of US Organizations,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to share with you my thoughts on this year's commemoration of the Day of the African Child. May I at the outset express on behalf of the African Union Commission, our appreciation to my co partners for this occasion; Save the Children, Global health council, US coalition For Child survival with whom we joined hands in commemorating the Day of the African Child 2009. Special thanks to US Congress, the US Government, my colleagues African Ambassadors, especially the Committee of African Ambassadors on Human and sustainable development, lead by H.E. Ambassador Hawa Ndilowe of the Republic of Malawi.

I would like to seize this opportunity also to thank the extraordinary panelists, who will share with us their analysis on the African child survival.

Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

You may all recall that the African Union launched last year the **“Accelerated Action on the Implementation of the Plan of Action towards Africa Fit for Children (2008 – 2012)**. This year, the celebration of the Day of the African Child is under the same theme: **“Africa Fit for Children: A Call for Accelerated Action Towards Their Survival”**.

Despite the alarming situation, (Every year in Sub-Sahara Africa, 1.16 million babies die in the first month of life, and another million babies are stillborn), several African countries have begun to reduce both newborn and under-five mortality. To site a few examples, Eritrea, Malawi, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Madagascar, Tanzania, and Uganda provide valuable examples of leadership, district-based management, focus on scaling up essential interventions, and ways to protect poor families from escalating health care costs.

Today, even if we still have a lot to do to meet the MDG 4 (child survival) in Africa, I would like to share with you 3 important messages: First: **“We have Success stories in Africa”**. We are here to celebrate good practices.

Referring to the report of UNICEF and Save the Children on the progress that Africa has made in reaching the Accelerated Action Towards Africa Fit for Children 2008 – 2012, which is published today, some important facts need to be highlighted:

1. **Malawi** reduced the under-five mortality rate from 210 per 1, 000 live births in 1990 to 111 per 1, 000 in 2007;
2. **Liberia's** under-5 mortality rate has reduced significantly in recent years and as a result an additional 23, 000 child lives been saved each year since 2006;
3. **Botswana's** under-five mortality rate has reduced from 87 to 40 per 1, 000 since 2000 and as a result an additional 4, 000 children's lives a year have been saved.
4. **Libya's** under-five mortality rate was reduced from 41 to 18 per 1, 000 between 1990 and 2007.
5. **Ethiopia** has achieved significant progress in reducing the under-five mortality rate from 204 per 1, 000 live births in 1990 to 119 per 1, 000 in 2007.

I am personally encouraged by those successes. They give to all of us the conviction and confidence that, if we continue on the same pathway, Africa could be on track to achieve MDG 4.

My second message is that, **“We can achieve more”**. The African Union and African States are committed, for Africa Fit for Children. In the Addis Ababa Declaration after the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the latest African Union Conference of Ministers of Health in May 2009, the political commitment of the African Heads of State was emphasized. Recognizing the fact that MDG 4 (child survival) and 5 (maternal health) are intimately connected. The Conference welcomed the initiative of the African Union Commission with relevant partners and officially launched a continental Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA) under the slogan “Africa Cares: No Woman Should Die While Giving Life”. In addition, the Conference reaffirmed the commitment to scale up high impact maternal, neonatal and child health interventions, to reduce maternal, neonatal and child mortality.

I also would like to seize this occasion to inform you that this year, the African Union launches the campaign against trafficking, under the theme: Theme: “Let's Combat Trafficking in Human Beings Especially Women and Children: 2009-2012.” This initiative also falls within the framework of the Plan of Action on Africa Fit for Children and the Call for Accelerated Action on the implementation of the Plan of Action towards Africa Fit for Children. The African Union Mission together with partners will develop shortly an action plan to conduct the campaign.

My third and last important message is **“to make a strong appeal”** to the Congress, US Government, US Foundations, Universities, NGOs and all partners

to continue your precious support to Africa to reduce maternal, neonatal and child mortality, especially through the 2 important campaigns earlier announced.

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude my remarks by reaffirming the commitment of the African Union for the African Child survival.

Thank you all.