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THIS DAY

Africa: First Lady Urges Cooperation on Public Health

27 June 2009

Lagos — First Lady, Hajiya Turai Yar'Adua, yesterday in Brussels, Belgium, called for greater transnational cooperation between Africa and development partners.

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She made the call in a paper entitled, "Public Health and Pandemia in Africa" during the 20th conference of Crans Montana Forum, chaired by Princess Astrid of Belgium.

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The first lady, who was among five other guest speakers, said concerted efforts to combat tuberculosis and the laudable efforts of international development partners had resulted in successes in the treatment of the disease.

She said the challenges posed by pandemics for Africa were better appreciated when HIV and AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis were left unchecked.

"These diseases have the potentials to seriously compromise our development efforts, impoverish our people, distabilise our societies and cause pervasive insecurity in our countries," she added.

She listed HIV and AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, cerebro-spinal meningitis and Lassa fever as some of the diseases affecting African countries.

Yar'Adua, however, said it was encouraging that some policies of the Nigerian government had had measurable palliative effects.

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"For instance, the proactive role of the National Agency for the Control of HIV and AIDS (NACA) with specific strategy such as the five-year National Strategic Framework for Action (2005-2009) has succeeded in reducing HIV and AIDS prevalence nationwide," she said. She said though malaria and tuberculosis remained public health problem in the country, initiatives such as the Roll Back Malaria had helped in dractically reducing the diseases.

"This grim picture calls for greater transnational cooperation and productive partnership between Africa and our development partners," she said.

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Yar'Adua said in an increasingly globalising world, the international community could not afford to turn

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 Summer School in more prosperous and stable world," she added.
 Malta in July, by UCL
 and University of Malta
 The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the extraordinary session was chaired by the Princess while Prof. Awa Seck of Roll Back Malaria Partnership, WHO, and Mr Francois Du Monde were the discussants.

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 The theme of the session was "The International Role of the European Union: Its Strategies Towards the East, Africa and the Arab World."
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 Hon. Frank Lawal of the House of Representatives represented the ECOWAS Parliament at the forum, which drew 600 participants from across the globe.

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