

PRESS RELEASE – 24 January 2020

## **Lomé Initiative: African countries unite to fight the trafficking of fake medicines**

On Saturday 18 January, the Lomé Initiative, developed by the Brazzaville Foundation, was formally launched in Lomé, Togo, by H.E. Faure Gnassingbé, President of Togo; H.E. Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda; H.E. Macky Sall, President of Senegal, as well as representatives from H.E. President Denis Sassou-Nguesso, H.E. President Nana Akufo-Addo, and H.E. President Mahamadou Issoufou.

**The Presidents signed a Political Declaration to crack down on the trafficking of fake medicines in Africa, by ratifying existing international agreements and introducing new criminal penalties against traffickers.**

**The Political Declaration will be implemented through a Framework Agreement over the next few months.**

**The Brazzaville Foundation will open an online consultation for civil society to contribute ideas and solutions. This will result in concrete proposals which will be discussed at a follow-up Forum in an African capital before the end of the year.**

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During the plenary session of the high-level signing ceremony, which brought together hundreds of participants and over twenty speakers, **H.E. Faure Gnassingbé, President of Togo**, said:

*“We are fighting for our people’s health, so we all have access to quality and affordable care. Today’s an important day, because it is the first time that us Africans are tackling the trafficking of fake medicines. Our continent and our people suffer most from its devastating consequences. Africa must commit to fighting this deadly scourge.”*

**The World Health Organisation’s Director General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**, who attended the session, said:

*“In an increasingly globalized world, no one country has sufficient resources and capacity to effectively regulate the whole supply chain for health products. Substandard and falsified medicines are a shared problem. We must work together on shared solutions. That’s why we are pleased to support the Lomé Initiative.”*

**H.E. Omar Hilale, President of the UNICEF Executive Board** called on the journalists present at the press conference:

*“The Lomé summit marks the beginning of a new era for Africans, as their leaders commit to improving healthcare for all. I call upon the media all over the world to report on this murderous trafficking. Given the considerable scale and complexity of the issue, it is vital to shine a light on what is at stake.”*

**Jean-Louis Bruguière, former counter-terrorism judge** and member of the Brazzaville Foundation Advisory Board emphasised the security aspects:

*“This is a historic event, because it is the real starting point for strong political decisions. It is undeniable that the trafficking of fake medicines significantly and increasingly contributes to funding terrorism. The Lomé Initiative will help alert people to this issue worldwide and place it at the top of our global agenda, as is the case for global warming. Concrete action will follow.”*

**Aminata Touré, President of the Economic and Social Council of Senegal**, who moderated the summit stated:

*« These death traffickers do not know any borders: it is crucial that our countries work together, define intergovernmental cooperation mechanisms, share intel, and harmonise legislation to criminalise this activity. »*



**Jean-Yves Ollivier, Founder and Chairman of the Brazzaville Foundation, concluded:**

*“The Brazzaville Foundation is extremely proud to have launched this Initiative; we thank the Heads of state and signatory countries for their long-term commitment. We are now going to open an online consultation for civil society to contribute ideas and propose immediate solutions. To discuss the outcome, youth delegates from all the signatory countries will be invited to a Forum to be held before the end of the year in an African capital. The Lomé Initiative is only starting and will continue.”*

**Links:**

- Political Declaration available [here](#)
- Official pictures available [here](#)
- Footage of the official signing ceremony available [here](#)

**Key figures (source: World Health Organisation)**

- Each year, the value of the illegal market for non-standard and falsified drugs is estimated to be worth **\$200 billion**, or about **10-15%** of the global pharmaceutical market.
- In 2015, the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene estimated that **over 122,000 children under five** die each year due to poor-quality antimalarials in sub-Saharan Africa.
- It is estimated that **128 countries** worldwide are affected by falsified medicines.
- **42%** of all falsified medicines discovered since 2013 were in Africa.
- It is estimated that falsified medicines account for **30-60%** of all medical products in certain African countries. In countries where regulations have been implemented and strictly enforced, this figure is **1%**.

**Press contact**

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**About the Brazzaville Foundation**

The Brazzaville Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit organisation based in the UK and is registered with the Charity Commission. Under the patronage of H.R.H. Prince Michael of Kent, the Foundation is led by an experienced Board of Directors, chaired by its founder Jean-Yves Ollivier, and supported by a distinguished Advisory Board including former presidents and prime ministers as well as a former Nobel Peace Prize laureate. The Foundation develops initiatives to promote sustainable development, conflict prevention and facilitate peaceful cooperation on the African continent.

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**#FakeDrugsRealCrime**

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