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**DIVISION OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION**

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**THE AFRICAN UNION AND THE FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATIVE NEW  
DIAGNOSTIC SIGN MOU TO FIGHT TRYPANOSOMIASIS**

**Addis Ababa 26 January 2008** – A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), to increase awareness of the campaign for the eradication of trypanosomiasis, also known as sleeping sickness, was signed on 25 January 2008 between the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostic (FIND), at the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The signing ceremony took place between the Director for Rural Economy and Agriculture, Dr. Ahmadu Babagana, and the Chief Executive Officer of FIND, Dr. Giorgio Roscigno. The MOU aims at reinforcing collaboration ties between the Commission and FIND. The three year programme between the two institutions is expected to increase awareness of the campaign for the eradication of the disease as well as disseminate improved diagnostic tools provided by FIND and other partners.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Dr. Babagana explained that humankind has the technically feasible means to eliminate the scourge of trypanosomiasis. He said the Commission has been seeking support from Africa's development partners to assist the affected African countries in accomplishing the objectives of the PATTEC Initiative. Dr. Babagana thanked FIND for extending an arm of cooperation to the Commission in providing technical expertise and funding for the fight against trypanosomiasis.

FIND CEO Dr. Roscigno, on his part, presented his foundation as a non-governmental research and development organisation working on tropical diseases, including trypanosomiasis. He said that FIND is engaged in efforts to develop improved diagnostic tools which are required to accurately detect the presence or absence of the disease and facilitate early treatment of detected cases.

It is worth recalling that in July 2000, at the African Union summit in Lome Togo, a decision was reached to respond in concert to the urgent need to stem the ravages of trypanosomiasis, a severe disease transmitted by tsetse flies that afflicts people and livestock, and which affects 35 African countries, causing debility, diminished productivity, massive economic losses, and death. During the summit, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union adopted measures that led to the creation of the African Union Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign (PATTEC).