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## **MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/FOUNDER, CLARISSE MEFOTSO FALL, MPH**

Welcome to **African Hope Committee, Inc., 5th Annual Health Summit 2008.**

African Hope Committee (AHC) is about changing and improving the life of African women, young girls, boys, and their families. We listen to the needs and dreams of individuals we serve in the community. We provide the support they need in order to live and accomplish their dreams. We work to change stereotypes that people with cultural and linguistic barriers face, and we advocate on their behalf the changes they need in order to improve their lives. This year is no different.

Our programs and services have grown beyond HIV awareness and prevention over the last four years. Our website has been updated to reflect our current focus and services and has become a model of accessibility. It provides user-friendly access for visitors from all over the world to better service our clients. We encourage you to browse our website at [www.afriquehope.org](http://www.afriquehope.org).

Over the past five years, there has been significant improvement in the work we do to alleviate the difficulties faced in the African community despite the limited funds available to accomplish our goals. AHC's health and immigration programs became the main focus at the end of this year after thorough assessments. The need for health and immigration services, assisting clients in awareness of their legal status, obtaining legal status, and receiving the care they need have been the critical services we offered. Having recognized and embraced these issues, AHC's staff and Board of Directors periodically review, adjust, and change its priorities so that services are congruent to the issues confronting the African community and our society at large. Several reviews and assessments took place over the past five years and by the beginning of this year, we placed a team together to refine and redefine our vision and mission. We have set down our priorities step-by-step, to identify our strengths, uniqueness, and capacity to achieve the goals we identified with the Board of Directors.

The creation of AHC's Family Empowerment Center has become our major priority. This center will be the umbrella of our core work in facilitating our four concepts in which each one of them will later be designed to become a theoretical model. This includes good health, immigration assistance, education, and employment opportunities.

It has been a great honor to have your support over the past five years. This support ranges from community organizers, leaders of our community and other community, politicians, faith based organizations, colleges and universities, corporations, foundations and government agencies. Without your support and guidance, AHC would have never reached this 5th year of work and accomplished so many of our goals. Although we have faced lots of challenges including financial restraints and staffing resources, AHC has still been able to implement its programs effectively.

We still have much to do. We look ahead to challenges in the near and distant future. Your continued support is much appreciated as we work to create a fair and just community in which people from all walks of life can fully participate. AHC is working to embrace new opportunities, new faces and new challenges. We look forward to it all!

Many thanks to all my staff, Board of Directors, speakers, health advocates and countless individuals in making this extraordinary event possible for the community in which we serve.

Clarisse Mefotso Fall, MPH  
Executive Directive/Founder