



# **A CONVENING TO CATALYZE ACTION: TRANSFORMING HEALTH FINANCING IN AFRICA**

Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center,  
1st – 3rd April 2025

**SUMMARY MEETING REPORT**

## TOWARD HEALTH SOVEREIGNTY: A BELLAGIO REFLECTION THROUGH DR. DONALD KABERUKA'S LENS

The Bellagio convening marked a pivotal moment in Africa's pursuit of financial sovereignty in health. Framed by the powerful insights of Dr. Donald Kaberuka, the gathering moved beyond technical discussions to a bold call: **It is time for Africa to take ownership of its health agenda.**



### A TURNING POINT IN HEALTH FINANCING

Dr. Kaberuka set the tone by declaring that the global aid system, as we've known it for the past 60 years, is coming to an end. This does not signal crisis—but opportunity. For too long, African health systems have been shaped by donor priorities, fragmented funding, and vertical programming. In the face of declining external aid and growing complexity—from pandemics to climate stress—the continent must reimagine health financing as a **sovereign, strategic investment.**

### LEARNING FROM THE WORLD, LEADING WITH OUR OWN

Drawing on Vietnam's transformation—from a \$14B to a \$500B economy while strengthening its health system—Dr. Kaberuka illustrated how **strategic, homegrown investments** can drive both economic and health gains. Africa must now forge its own model, rooted in resilience, financial independence, and strong domestic institutions.





## HEALTH AS A WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY INVESTMENT

A clear takeaway from the Bellagio discussions, reinforced by Dr. Kaberuka's message, is that health financing cannot remain the domain of health ministries alone. Infrastructure, education, water, energy, and digital connectivity all shape health outcomes. **Embedding health across all policies** and budgets is essential to building sustainable systems.

## FROM DEPENDENCY TO INTERDEPENDENCE

In today's interconnected world, challenges like pandemics, migration, and climate shocks demand cooperative solutions. Dr. Kaberuka emphasized that Africa must move from being aid recipients to **equal partners in global health**, advocating for aligned, predictable funding that strengthens systems, not just programs.



## THE PATH AHEAD: STRATEGIC SHIFTS

While specific actions will vary by context, several shared priorities emerged from the convening:

- **Strategic Domestic Investment**

Health must be seen as an enabler of economic growth, not just a social sector expense.

- **Community-Led, Tech-Enabled Systems**

Embrace digital tools and community health workers to expand access and equity.

- **Finance Ministry Leadership**

Engage finance leaders in health outcomes, linking investments in infrastructure and education to national wellbeing.

- **Redefining Partnerships**

Advocate for funding models that support long-term system strengthening and local innovation.

## **CONCLUSION: DESIGNING A SOVEREIGN FUTURE**

Dr. Kaberuka's call to action was clear: Africa cannot build resilient health systems by mimicking others. **We must design our own models—rooted in sovereignty, strategic investment, and local innovation.** The Bellagio meeting was not just a milestone; it was a turning point in the narrative. From dependency to dignity, from aid to autonomy—Africa is ready to lead



*Dr.  
Donald Kaberuka*

