REGIONALISM AND THE REINVIGORATION OF GLOBAL HEALTH DIPLOMACY: LESSONS FROM AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

In the era of the persisting global north-south health divide, regional integration organizations have emerged as significant legal and diplomatic spaces to advance health goals. In this context, African regionalism is evolving as important frameworks for promoting health diplomacy. This evolving regional health diplomacy is contributing to the reinforcement of social goals of new regionalism in Africa and shaping the drivers of health policy at the global, regional and domestic levels. This paper with reference to case studies of African regional and sub-regional integration organizations examines the drivers, nature and limits of their practice of health diplomacy. It also analyzes the nature of engagement of African regional groupings with select international health regimes. The paper identifies the strengths and limits of regionalism for health diplomacy that also advances the protection of public health. It concludes by proposing options to foster health diplomacy and its implications for the advancement of health at the domestic, regional and global levels.

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