

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

EAST AFRICAN HEALTH RESEARCH COMMISSION



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CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE 9TH EAST AFRICAN HEALTH AND SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE TO BE HELD FROM 27TH TO 29TH SEPTEMBER 2023, KIGALI, REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

1. BACKGROUND

The 12th Ordinary Session of the EAC Council of Ministers (2006) approved the annual East African Health and Scientific Conference & International Health Exhibition and Trade Fair (EAHSC) to be convened in East Africa and hosted on a rotational basis by the EAC Partner States through their respective National Ministries responsible for EAC Affairs, Ministries responsible for Health, and other relevant organizations, and in close collaboration with regional and international health-related NGOs, civil society organizations, individuals, and stakeholders.

The EAHSC contributes towards strengthening regional cooperation in health in line with Article 118 of the Treaty for the establishment of EAC as well as other relevant provisions of the EAC Common Market Protocol. It enhances the ideals of the EAC, which is free movement of People, Services, and Goods.

The EAHSC is an event for researchers to present and discuss their work and provides an important channel for exchange of information between researchers. The EAHSC is organized in parallel sessions of short (about 15 minutes), and concise oral presentations organized by sub-themes, followed by discussions. Prior to oral presentation sessions, keynote speeches by Scholars are organized on various topics related to the main theme of the Conference. A keynote speech is often longer, lasting sometimes up to an hour and a half, particularly if there are several keynote speakers on a panel. In addition to the oral presentations, there are also poster presentations, round tables, and symposia on various issues.

In the premises of the Conference Hall and during the whole conference period of three

(3) days, international health exhibition is organized on various health products and technologies made in the EAC Partner States to promote them.

Based on the Protocol establishing the East African Health Research Commission (EAHRC), the Commission is tasked with the responsibility of coordinating the East

African Health and Scientific Conference & International Health Exhibition and Trade Fair.

Since 2007 up to 2021, eight (8) EAHSC have been organized as follows:

Table 1: East African health and Scientific Conferences organized since 2007 up to 2021

#	Dates	Country/City
1	28 th -30 th March 2007	Uganda/Kampala
2	26 th -28 th March 2008	Tanzania/Arusha
3	25 th -27 th March 2009	Kenya/Nairobi
4	27 th -29 th March 2013	Rwanda/Kigali
5	25 th -27 th March 2015	Uganda/Kampala
6	29 th -31 st March 2017	Burundi/Bujumbura
7	27 th -29 th March 2019	Tanzania/Dar es Salaam
8	17 th - 19 th November 2021	Kenya/Nairobi

Based on the Protocol establishing the East African Health Research Commission (EAHRC), the Commission is tasked with the responsibility of coordinating the East African Health and Scientific Conference & International Health Exhibition and Trade Fair. Among all these conferences, EAHRC coordinated the 6th, 7th and 8th EAHSC.

2. REVIEWED CONCEPT OF THE EAHSC

The EAHRC has developed the concept note of the conference, which will guide the organization and consistency of the conference. It has collated, reviewed, and organized the available information from different sources to guide the development of the concept. EAHRC after discussion with various stakeholders has restructured some and introduced new aspects of the EAHRC: Research for Health and Prosperity conference to allow it to match with the current needs and the role that EAHRC can play in the health sector.

Name of the conference

The name of the conference “East African Health and Scientific Conference & International Health Exhibition and Trade Fair” is rather long. In accordance with the recommendation of the 3rd EAHRC Commissioners meeting to review the name of

the conference, the EAHRC Secretariat proposed the name to be shortened as follows: “East African Health and Scientific Conference” and the official acronym be “EAHSC”.

Periodicity

In order to allow for adequate time to generate tangible scientific material for the conference, to allow for sufficient time for preparation of the subsequent conference, mobilization of resources, and for implementation and reporting of the progress of the post conference activities, the conference will be held biennially. Post conference activities will be conducted in parallel with preparatory activities of the next conference. The EAHSC will be scheduled around the same time biennially; currently is during the last week of March.

3. Theme, sub-themes and symposia for the 9th EAHSC

The main theme of the Conference is: “**Challenges and Strategies to preparedness and response to Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases: lessons learnt from the COVID- 19 pandemic**”

Sub-themes will be presented and discussed during the first two days of the conference. Each sub-theme will start with a state-of-the-art presentation, after which evidence-based scientific material will be presented. The sub-themes will be presented by experts in those areas. They build on the main theme and provide detailed evidence- based information on specific key areas. These presentations will be discussed by the audience and experts. The presentations will result in outlines of recommendations.

The six (6) following Sub-themes will be covered during the 9th EAHSC:

1. Innovative approaches and interventions to strengthen health systems, leadership and governance for management of communicable and non-communicable diseases

Preamble:

Presentations and papers will focus on addressing communicable and non-communicable diseases through global health initiatives. Presentations and papers will recommend innovative approaches and interventions to strengthen health systems to sustain the rising prevalence of communicable and non-communicable diseases. The presentations will also evaluate existing health policies for prevention and management of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

2. Is the World prepared for future pandemics? Success, opportunities, and challenges in management of COVID-19 and Ebola

Preamble:

Presentations and papers will focus on how the health systems in the world, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the East Africa Sub-Region were prepared to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and to Ebola, their response effectiveness and efficiency in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic and Ebola. Presentations and papers will also make profit of lessons learnt to discuss the health systems readiness to successfully respond to future Pandemics.

3. Addressing social, economic and political impacts caused by COVID-19 pandemic**Preamble**

Presentations and papers will discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the socio-political and economic life of the populations and institutions globally and in the East Africa Sub-Region in particular. Presentations and papers will also focus on how the populations and institutions were resilient to the shocks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the different strategies, mechanisms and schemes through which they operated and the enablers and barriers to their success.

4. Harnessing digital technologies for preparedness and response to communicable and non-communicable diseases**Preamble**

Presentations and papers will discuss strategies on scaling up digital technologies to be fully Integrated Disease Surveillance and Responses systems. The presentations will emphasize the use of digital technologies to promote real timely monitoring disease outbreaks and responses.

5. Manufacturing and regulation of Medicines, Vaccines, Diagnostics, and other health technologies in the context of Epidemics and Pandemics**Preamble**

Presentations and papers will discuss innovative approaches and interventions in manufacturing and regulation of diagnostics, vaccines, biologicals, medicines and other health products during pre and post COVID-19 era.

6. Traditional and Herbal Medicines use, practices and believes during COVID-19 Pandemic

Preamble:

Presentations and papers will focus on the use of traditional and herbal medicines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Presentations and papers will also focus on skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences used during the COVID-19 pandemic in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement, or treatment of the pandemic.

Symposia:

The EAHRC Scientific committee discussed the preparation of the Symposia during the conference. The Scientific committee identified EAC Partner States to chair and coordinate each Symposium which is related to the Main theme of the 9th EAHSC and its Subthemes. In this regard, each country will identify a Scholar to present on each of the symposia before a discussions panel to be held among key experts from the East Africa Region.

The following topics of symposia were proposed:

- 1. Beyond health systems: socio-economic, political and security issues and their impact on preparedness and response to the COVID-19 and Ebola**
- 2. Regulatory System Ecosystem and Access to Medical Products and Diagnostics and Establishment of African Medicines Agency (AMA) in the context Emergencies, Epidemics and Pandemics.**
- 3. Integration of prevention and management of HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria and other infectious diseases with reproductive health initiatives**
- 4. Global challenges and opportunities for prevention and control of NCD**

4. ORGANISATION OF THE 9th EAHSC

i. Financing

According to the concept note of the EAHSC, the conference is jointly organised and financed by EAC and the host country. The EAHRC Secretariat and the host country have the responsibility to mobilise resources for the conference. Other EAC Partner States as well have the responsibility to mobilise resources and participants for the conference.

ii. Target of the conference

The EAHSC brings together stakeholders of the health sector from EAC (EAC Secretariat, East African Legislative Assembly, East African Court of Justice, members of the EAC council of ministers, members of the summit, and EAC institutions), EAC Partner States that include ministers of health, finance, higher education, science and technology, members of parliament from national assemblies, government officials, researchers, scientists, practitioners, civil society, media, donors and development partners and the public at large.

iii. Conference publicity

Activities around the EAHSC publicity are carried out by the EAHRC, the host country and others. The website for the conference has been open since late June 2023. Furthermore, press conferences are expected to be organized at regional and host country level before the conference.

iv. Call for abstracts and their review

Advertisement for call of abstracts, which comprises the main theme of the EAHSC, sub-themes, symposia, exhibition, and trade fair was done late June 2023 and open for a period of one (1) month and then extended for 2 months. A total of 440 abstracts were received and reviewed by EAHRC Secretariat in collaboration with the Regional Scientific Sub-Committee. A final decision was made by EAHRC Secretariat regarding their acceptance for oral or poster presentation. The list of accepted abstracts will be presented to the EAHRC regional steering committee for approval.

v. Chair of the conference

The chair of the conference is the chair of the national steering committee of the host country. For the 9th EAHSC, the chairperson will be nominated by the Republic of Rwanda.

vi. Keynote Speaker

According to the concept note of the EAHSC, the keynote speaker for the main theme of the conference comes from one of the EAC Partner States on a rotational basis (and should not be from the host country). He is appointed by the Ministry of Health of the respective country. For the 9th EAHSC, EAHRC Secretariat officially communicated to the Republic of Kenya to nominate the keynote speaker for the main theme of the conference.

vii. Conference Program

According to the concept note of EAHSC, the program of the conference is developed by the scientific subcommittee of the host country and submitted to the EAHRC secretariat for review and eventual submission to the EAHSC regional steering committee for approval. The Regional Scientific sub-committee was formed based on the request of the Government of Rwanda. The RSSC comprises three members from all EAC Partner States. The Regional scientific

sub-committee handled the tasks of the host country scientific sub-committee and among other things, developed a drafted the program for the 9th EAHSC and adopted a provisional road map of the conference preparations.

viii. Steering committees

In accordance with the decisions of the 5th ordinary Meeting of the EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health held in Arusha, Tanzania on 21st January 2011, there are two EAHSC committees: (i) EAHSC Regional Steering Committee, and (ii) National Steering Committees. The host national steering committee also has various sub-committees. The members who constitute the various committees come from the relevant government organs, ministries, and institutions.

ix. Regional steering committee

In accordance with the concept note of the EAHSC, Each of the EAC Partner States nominates three (3) members for the EAHSC Regional Steering Committee. The regional steering committee (RSC) members are drawn from various government bodies, research, academic institutions, development partners, regional, intergovernmental organizations, and international organizations. Terms of reference have been developed and shared with all EAC partner States. To date, all EAC PS have reactivated their RSC and have requested to kindly fast track the nomination of their National Steering Committees.

The main function of the Regional Steering Committee is oversight of the organization of the conference.

xiii. National steering committee

Each EAC Partner State forms a National Steering Committee (NSC). The host nation forms a national steering committee that comprises of fifteen (15) members. The national steering committee members are drawn from various government, research and academic institutions, development partners and ministries responsible for health, and EAC affairs. The national steering committees shall form several sub-committees depending on the agenda and the scope of the conference.

ix. Registrations

The registration to the conference is done through the website of the conference or on site at the conference venue. Registration for the 9th EAHSC is open since 26th June 2023.

x. Preconference meetings

The EAHSC has preconference meetings which are: meetings of the EAC Partner States' National Health Professional Boards, Councils, Associations, Societies and

Federations. The Sectoral Council of Health (all sessions: Senior Officials, Coordination Committee and Ministers) take place the same week prior to the conference. The EAC Health ministers and Parliamentarians' forum on health also take place prior to the EAHRC.

xi. Conference proceedings

a. Book of abstracts of the conference

Abstracts accepted for the conference are compiled in a book of abstracts that is made available during the conference.

b. Conference activities

The conference activities are organised in subthemes. After the opening ceremony, the conference continues in plenary or in breakaway sessions.

c. Symposia

Symposia are taking place simultaneously with the subthemes of the conference.

d. international health exhibition and trade fair

The international health exhibition and trade fair are combined in one activity.

e. Reporting

A report on the conference proceedings is prepared and presented during the last day of the conference. The host country agreed to avail twenty (20) scientists to be rapporteurs of the 9th EAHSC sessions under the supervision and coordination of Chief rapporteurs who is the member of the Regional Scientific Sub-Committee.