



East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT AND CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

The 14th Best Practices Forum and 30th Directors Joint Consultative Committee Meeting

Dates: 16-18 June 2024

Venue: Arusha

Theme: 50 years of leadership and excellence in regional health collaboration

Background

The East, Central and Southern African Health Community (ECSA-HC) is an inter-governmental organization that fosters and promotes regional cooperation in health. Its member states are Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In pursuit of its mandate, ECSA-HC facilitates the convening of regional meetings namely; the Best Practices Forum (BPF) and the Directors Joint Consultative Committee (DJCC). The meetings bring together senior officials from Ministries of Health, Health Research Institutions and Heads of Health Training Institutions from Member States; diverse collaborating Partners and Experts from the region and beyond.

The 14th BPF will be unique as ECSA-HC will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2024. The organization has been instrumental in promoting health in the region and fostering cooperation among member states. The ECSA-HC Golden Jubilee Celebration will provide an opportunity to reflect on the organization's achievements over the past 50 years and to plan for the future hence the formulation of the theme.

Why the Regional Forum on Best Practices?

All countries in the East, Central and Southern African region have committed themselves to work towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals which were approved and adopted by Heads of State and Governments at the United Nations General Assembly. In this regard, countries continue to implement health care programmes and interventions aimed at improving the health status of the people.

Ministers of Health, Permanent Secretaries, Directors and senior officials who are all responsible for the health of the people, as well as researchers, representatives of regional, international organizations, universities, Non-Governmental organizations and health professionals from both the private and public sectors do not usually come together to review progress on the on-going programmes and interventions; and identify achievements, best practices, success stories, constraints and challenges.

Although numerous studies, evaluations, assessments and reviews of health care interventions and health systems issues are conducted by Governments, universities, regional and international organizations, individual researchers and health professionals these are not disseminated widely. This means that other experts and policy makers and programme makers do not get the opportunity to share and learn from others. Inadequate dissemination means that results of studies are not shared and consequently are not utilized to promote better understanding of what works and does not; and are not used to improve programme delivery and to inform policy development and decision making. Insufficient dissemination also results in unnecessary duplication of research work and waste of scarce resources.

The forum therefore provides a permanent mechanism for policy makers, health experts, researchers and health professionals to disseminate and share best practices in health care. The identification, documentation and dissemination of best practices, and utilization in decision making, and policy formulation and implementation will contribute towards the attainment of the SDGs and other Regional and International Goals .

How does the Regional Forum differ from other meetings

The scientific forum provides an opportunity for participants from Governments, Universities, Research Institutions, regional and international organizations to present results of relevant research work on health care. Potential presenters of papers send their abstracts and papers based on the theme and sub-themes of the forum to the organizers.

The scientific forum is unique in that it provides linkages between policymakers, directors of health, health experts, researchers and health professionals to interact, share best practices and agree on recommendations to improve health care in the region. The recommendations of the forum are then presented to technical and policy forums such as the Directors' Joint Consultative Committee (DJCC), the Conference of Health Ministers and other international meetings and conferences.

Objectives of the Forum

The objectives of the forum are as follows:

1. To provide a forum for participants to review the health systems challenges and to propose recommendations for addressing them.
2. To identify some best practices in health care in the region
3. To share experiences among participants on health care financing issues including equity in health care, performance-based budget allocation to the health sector.
4. To make recommendations on best practices in health care, in particular how these practices can be scaled up.

The Directors' Joint Consultative Committee

a. Establishment of the DJCC

The DJCC was established in 1991 by the Health Ministers' Conference in-order to create a forum of the highest technical experts who would advise the Ministers on health issues in the Region. It was envisaged that the DJCC would have the practical technical expertise and would be able to relate it to policy, the socio-economic environment of governments and would thus be the best positioned to advise the Health Ministers.

b. Composition of the DJCC

The membership of the DJCC consists of;

- (a) Directors of Medical and Public Health Services,
- (b) Deans of Medical Schools and other health training institutions
- (c) Heads of Health Research Institutions

Depending on the theme of the DJCC meetings, other relevant key professional health cadres such as nurses, pharmacists, health planners, policy analysts, economists and health services administrators are also invited to attend the DJCC meetings.

The College of Health Sciences and affiliated Constituent Colleges also provide updates to the DJCC which are then transmitted to the AC and subsequently to the HMC for action.

c. Functions of the Directors' Joint Consultative Committee (DJCC)

This forum discusses the technical issues and advises on those that feed into the ECSA-HC programmes, through the Advisory Committee and as approved by the Health Ministers Conference. Its functions include:

- i. To review key policy matters affecting the health sector
- ii. To review and give direction to ECSA programmes, research and training in the region
- iii. To monitor the implementation and impact of the various programmes undertaken by the Secretariat
- iv. To share examples of best practices from the health sector in member states
- v. To report to the HMC through the Advisory Committee.

d. Meeting of the Directors Joint Consultative Committee Meeting (DJCC)

The DJCC meets annually and in most cases their meetings as preceded by a Best Practices Forum where presentations on experiences and practices in the region are shared in parallel and plenary sessions.

The experiences and best practices are guided by a Theme and Sub themes approved by a preceding Health Ministers' Conference. During its closed meeting, the DJCC synthesizes the discussions of the Best Practices Forum and come up with recommendations for submitting to the next ECSA HC Health Ministers' Conference.

These recommendations are discussed by the Health Ministers' Conference. The Hon Ministers then come up with Resolutions for their Conference on the basis of the recommendations. The resolutions passed by the Health Ministers' Conference create a guide for solidarity, shared programming, adoption and adaption of policies and practices in member states.

Aim and Scope of the Conference

The aim of the BPF and DJCC meetings is to share best practices and research evidence, identify relevant health policy issues and making recommendations to the Health Ministers Conference, towards the improvement of health programming and outcomes in the region. The upcoming conference will provide a forum for health scientists, policy makers, development partners and other stakeholders in health to present their best practices and research evidence that inform policies and programming in the ECSA region.

The Conference will be organized in two parts as follows;

1. The Regional Forum on Best Practices
2. The Directors Joint Consultative Committee

Conference Theme and Sub-themes

The theme for the 14th BPF is Five decades of leadership and excellence in regional health collaboration

The theme will be addressed through the following sub-themes:

1. Human Resources for Health
2. NCDs, Mental Health and Substance abuse
3. Climate change and Health
4. Emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases
5. Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health and Nutrition
6. Health Financing
7. Technology and Innovation in health

Call for Abstracts

ECSA-HC invites submission of abstracts for best practices and scientific papers that are relevant to the conference theme and sub themes. The scientific papers and best practices should consist of case studies and evidence-based programme experiences that are innovative, unique or have added value and new thinking in health. The papers will form the basis for the recommendations that will be presented to the Health Ministers for further deliberation and adoption as resolutions. From the accepted abstracts, some best practices and scientific papers will be selected to undergo further review and validation and thereafter published for wider dissemination in the region. Abstracts submission is open until 25th May 2024. Authors of accepted abstracts will be notified on or before 31st May 2024. Kindly prepare your abstracts using the Abstract Submission portal available on the event page at <https://ecsahc.org/hmc>

Conference Fees

The following are the Conference Fees, which will be paid before or during registration at the Conference:

Category	Early Registration (by 25 May 2024)	After 25th May 2024
Participants from ECSA Member States	300	400
Participants from other African countries	400	500
Participants from the Rest of the World	500	600

Presenters of accepted Abstracts	200	N/A
Students	200	

Enquiries

Enquiries relating to the submission and presentation of abstracts may be sent to abstracts@ecsahc.org. Updates and further information relating to the conference will be posted on the ECSA-HC website: www.ecsahc.org/hmc/

Details about being conference Sponsors and Exhibitors