



AHBS- 2nd High level round table

Preparing Africa: What next after the COVID-19 surge?

29th July 2020



This round table is brought to you by Africa Health Business (AHB)

AHB is a pan-African advisory, consulting and investment firm that focuses on innovative partnerships to transform health in Africa. AHB promotes the growth of the private health sector in Africa to generate affordable, accessible, and quality healthcare for all.

MODERATOR

Dr. Amit Thakker

Executive Chairman,
Africa Health Business



Every ministry of health and global health leader is thinking about what we need to do today to have a better tomorrow. What we do in the next three months in Africa will predict the long-term impact of the pandemic. The rate at which COVID-19 is spreading in Africa is alarming. In some ways, though, we are lucky because we are at the tail end of the global transmission chain and have had time to learn how to slow the virus. Today we have the opportunity to hear from the public sector, with representatives from ministries of health across the continent, as well as private sector partners.

There are, of course, challenges in public-private partnership, but we have a common enemy and we want to continue strengthening collaboration. Solidarity needs to spread across Africa, not only between public and private sectors at the national level, but partnerships across borders.

GUEST SPEAKER

Mr. Philippe Francois

Global Head, AXA



Africa is an important part of the future of the world because of the demography, the potential and the resources of the continent. In this context, we need to see African governments and private sectors investing in health. It is important for Africa to invest in health, which helps ensure the health of the population but also ensures economic growth. Of course, this pandemic has shaken the world, but even before COVID-19, AXA was speaking with many African ministries of health regarding strengthening of health systems and they are continuing this same agenda. It is as important, if not more important, than ever to work toward universal health coverage, public-private partnerships and strong health systems.

Event Partners



PHARMACCESSGROUP



Ministries of Health



Dr. Muhammad Gad

Chief Executive of the Egyptian Ambulance Authority & Minister's Adviser on Foreign Relations, Egypt

The curve of COVID-19 is declining now in Egypt. The work of the next phase is to support the issue of a vaccine for the whole world. Egypt is starting a partnership with a Chinese company to help develop a vaccine for COVID-19, including the clinical trial phase. This is a good opportunity for Egypt and also the rest of the continent. The country is working hard to fight against COVID-19 alongside partners on the continent and throughout the world.

Dr. Maureen Martey

Public Health Physician Specialist and Head, Resource Mobilization (Bilateral & Domestic), Ministry of Health, Ghana

In Ghana, there are currently 34,000 total cases, with 168 deaths, 30,000 recovered, and 3,000 active cases. The country has had strong leadership and commitment that has addressed the pandemic at national and local levels.

The pandemic has reemphasized the importance of having a well coordinated, multi-sectoral response that involves the private sector. Local industry has responded well to the needs of the pandemic, such as private companies manufacturing PPE. The Ghana COVID-19 Private Sector Fund, which has supported the construction of a 100-bed infectious disease center at the cost of \$7.5 million, has been fully funded and led by the private sector. This facility was completed in record time, in just three months, and was handed over to the government last week.

The government has also set up a fund for COVID-19 and the private sector has contributed to this. Despite the challenges that the global pandemic represents, it also provides an opportunity to build resilient health systems in partnership with the private sector.





Hon. Zweli Lawrence Mkhize

Minister of Health, South Africa

There is so much we're learning as we listen to our colleagues across the continent. It's only in sharing our experiences that we are able to learn from one another and take each other forward. By sharing any mistakes and challenges we face, we can help other countries to not go through the same things. South Africa's Coronavirus Command Council, led by the President, has been addressing the pandemic on every level, with effective communication channels from national leadership reaching community-based structures.

The country has identified 8 stages of intervention:



When the government saw the rapid increase of cases at the start of the pandemic, they went into lockdown, slowing the doubling time of the virus from 2 to 14 days. When lockdown started easing,

there was a rapid increase in the number of people who testing positive. South Africa has conducted over 2.8 million tests (47,000 tests per million population), with 459,721 people testing positive. Of those who tested positive, about 287,000 have recovered (61%) and there have been 7,257 deaths (1.6%).

The majority of people who have tested positive were diagnosed in the past 6-7 weeks, which is when the country eased off the lockdown. The government, just like every other country, is trying to balance between reducing transmission of the virus and the need to support the livelihoods of South Africa's citizens. Ultimately, we need to learn how to coexist with the virus, practicing prevention measures while we continue to build our economies.

What South Africa has found to be important is to create partnerships—with the private sector, with communities, etc. Businesses came together to form the Solidarity Fund to support the government in ensuring health workers and patients are well taken care of, including PPE, ventilators, and additional hospital beds. This was a unique situation where even those who normally compete against each other came together to assess the situation and collaborate to meet the needs of the country.

The government has started working with pharmaceutical manufacturers and the ministry has access to timely information of what stock levels of medicines are available across the country. This allows the government to act upon shortages immediately. Beyond the response to treatment, case management and working in hospitals, there is a lot of humanitarian work that needs to be done, as the pandemic has impacted and damaged food security, income security, etc. The government is also working hard to provide assistance to South African small businesses through grants and loans.

As countries across Africa open their economies and people go back to work, we need to ensure healthy behaviors are taking place, including mask wearing and social distancing. In South Africa, the government has informed managers and owners of businesses that they need to take responsibility of the people that come into their places of work, ensuring that everyone is complying with healthy behaviors.

We need to work together in partnership, from the national government down to the local community, to save our nations.

Open Forum

Dr. Githinji Gitahi

Amref Health Africa

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused health service disruption as well as socio-economic disruption. This has revealed and highlighted gaps and problems that had existed even prior to the current crisis, including:

- The neglect of public health. The capacity of public health, even in countries that were considered to have strong systems, have been poor.
- The need to respond to emergencies while also protecting primary services, meaning that we need to rethink the health system and design it so that it is not only curative, but also preventive.
- The necessity of explicit strategies to reach and protect the vulnerable, who have been most affected by this pandemic.
- Insufficient financing of common goods for health, or those that individuals can't pay for, such as disease surveillance, implementation of international health regulations, etc.
- The need for more investing in health, as it not only saves lives but helps economies grow.
- The importance of good governance. COVID-19 has demanded fast and difficult decisions from leaders. This can only be done well through an approach that includes the whole of society.
- The need for governments to be trusted by their populations, as it is impossible to be effective without building up trust capital.

Moving forward, adaptability is required. Health sectors need to have foresight to prepare for the future, insight to see around them and understand what is happening accurately, and cross-sight that can identify assets that already exist that can be brought together to use in the response. We need global solidarity to support national responses. The Africa CDC and WHO Afro have been exemplary models of this.



John Nkengasong

Africa CDC

The experiences of the ministers who have spoken offers us significant hope. We cannot fear this pandemic, we cannot panic. We will not win a war by being afraid but by fighting. The continent is still in a good place. As of today, about 38 countries are still reporting less than 5,000 cases of COVID-19. There are countries that have projected high numbers, like South Africa and Egypt, but even they are making significant progress, effectively tracking and addressing the virus. We need to look at the numbers and, instead of being afraid, be courageous and bold and do the right thing. This calls for cooperation with local communities; this battle will be won at the community level.

We have to make sure that political leadership continues to be steady. The chairperson of the African Union, President Ramaphosa, has demonstrated effective leadership during this time of uncertainty. [The Washington Post on 28th July published an article](#) that highlights the approach that the African Union and Africa CDC have taken, praising their leadership, especially the joint continent strategy and task force. Africa is rarely highlighted in such a positive way in international media, and this shows our capability as a continent. If we come together and coordinate, cooperate and communicate, we can beat this enemy.

Going forward, we need to launch a campaign focused on saving lives and saving livelihoods. We will open our borders by testing, by issuing COVID-19 certificates, by making sure that there is no discrimination or stigmatization.

The easiest way to send the virus underground is to begin to discriminate, so human rights need to be at the center of any strategy. And, of course, we need to work toward and prepare for the future vaccine. Access to vaccines over the next several months is going to be the largest geopolitical discussion that the world will face. This is the first time the world is confronting a situation where 7.8 billion people will need a vaccine for a single disease at the same time. Africa, a giant of the future, with 1.3 billion people, has to make a strong statement by rallying around a common vaccine development and delivery strategy to ensure that every person in every nation has access when it is ready. Do not be afraid, but exercise cooperation and solidarity.



Dr. Francisco Songane

Africa Public Health Foundation

We should salute Africa for the leadership being demonstrated and good work that is being done by governments and institutions across the continent. Many parts of the world can learn from Africa. Looking forward, we should make sure not to disarm. All major epidemics have shown the same things: weakness of health systems and institutions as well as poor health infrastructure. Once COVID-19 is over, we shouldn't go back to the way things were, but continue investing and building on the progress that has been made. We cannot be complacent about the improvements that are still needed.

The Abuja Declaration calls for 15% of governments' budgets to be allocated toward health. This is not enough. We are in the era of Agenda 2030 where solidarity is the priority. We need to move away from one-off interventions and toward continuous investment to ensure reliable, sustainable and resilient health systems.



Ms. Tara Prasad

UNICEF

Children suffer first and the most in any emergency. Decades of the progress that UNICEF has made is currently under threat as a result of this pandemic. In the past months, UNICEF has reoriented itself to prioritize addressing COVID-19, including using their emergency experience, their role in helping to ensure access to essential medicines, and their programming experience. With this in mind, they have been focusing on three primary areas:

1. Access to essential health services and products, not only for COVID-19, but for all health services.
2. Preparedness over panic, working toward better surveillance and diagnostic systems where potential disease outbreaks can be monitored.
3. Working for more geographic diversity and local manufacturing and less reliance on concentrated supply bases in India and China. This includes essential medicines, PPE, vaccines, etc.

None of this can be done without the private sector and they look forward to establishing shared value partnerships, where there's a win for both sides. The private sector has stepped up to the challenge of COVID-19 incredibly, with deep commitment and resilience. Working with platforms like AHB helps to create synergies, offering opportunities for matchmaking to ensure effective partnerships.



Ms. Aura Adriana Vilhelmsen

Novo Nordisk

As a global healthcare company and the largest provider of insulin in the world, Novo Nordisk has been committed to defeating diabetes, obesity and other serious chronic conditions for almost 100 years, with a presence in Africa for over 60 years where approximately 3 million people use their products. They work to come up with treatments, but also recognize the need to ensure the accessibility and affordability of these treatments for all people.

Although their expertise is not in infectious diseases, they acknowledge the common enemy and, therefore, share common interest in contributing to strengthening healthcare systems and empowering people with non-communicable diseases. Novo Nordisk's primary patients are at higher risk of COVID-19. The pandemic has also disrupted the ability to guarantee people's access to life-saving medicines. They hope to be seen as a valuable partner in this work and engage in specific ways with various partners in the future.



Dr. Elizabeth Wala

Kenya Healthcare Federation (KHF)

KHF's membership includes a wide range of players across the private health sector and has a history of engaging positively with the Ministry of Health. The pandemic has only strengthened this partnership, with KHF participating actively in the emergency response.

Often, public facilities are targeted when it comes to the response to a crisis, so KHF has been able to bring in the value of private sector, since they are responsible for at least 49% of service delivery in Kenya. They have built the capacity of several of their members in terms of human resources for health, also working on supply chain to clear up bottlenecks through advocacy. KHF has also engaged and mediated conversations between private insurance companies and the National Hospital Insurance Fund, looking towards management and reimbursement for COVID-19 patients.

Above all, COVID-19 has highlighted the need to embrace digital technology in healthcare. This has been a long time coming and the pandemic has highlighted its importance and necessity.

Dr. Toda Tokoa

Japan International Cooperation Agency, JICA

JICA has such admiration for Africa's efforts to protect the lives of their citizens, but Africa may face unprecedented severe socio-economic challenges moving forward. It would be naive to say it can be avoided, but it can be alleviated and leveraged to create a new, resilient Africa.

What is the most effective weapon against COVID-19? A combination of science and wisdom. In Africa, we're seeing business and community collaboration to create the products needed to address this pandemic. The unity among African countries has been strengthened through collaboration in the midst of this difficult time.

Japan, in tandem with other global partners, will keep going side by side with our African friends.



Ms. Clare Omatseye

Africa Healthcare Federation (AHF) and Chair of Healthcare Federation of Nigeria



We have seen examples across the continent of best practices in terms of pandemic responses, including how partnerships between public and private sectors are critical and essential. Nigeria has seen a steady increase of COVID-19 cases during the past four months. The active engagement of both the private and public sectors has been critical when it comes to service provision as well as supply chain management. Nigeria has learned so much about the institutional strengthening and capacity building required to bring access to quality healthcare to Africa as a whole.

Technology in healthcare cannot be emphasized enough. The statistics show that leveraging mobile health and telemedicine helps address the pandemic, but also other areas of healthcare. We've seen that the involvement of the private sector and their participation in the dialogue, being at the table where policies are being formulated, is very important. This was initially a slow process, but those barriers have been overcome. There has been a huge amount of private intervention in providing and setting up isolation centers.

How can we use this experience to move forward beyond COVID-19? This pandemic has given us the opportunity to put health on the map. There is no wealth without health and any economic priorities need to factor in health. Additionally, prevention is better than cure and more people are seeing that. A lot has been done and a lot more can be done. The next step is to ensure that Africa becomes fully self-sufficient in order to have sustainability.

Ms. Zola Mtshiyi

Healthcare Federation of South Africa



The South African Minister of Health, through his leadership, has led the country very well. Going forward, the biggest question we need to ask ourselves is: What will Africa look like in the next six months? Will we look like the US or like China?

The pandemic has highlighted areas that need to be improved. As it relates to technology, regional surveillance systems are necessary to monitor things like hospital beds and know what resources are available. Electronic medical records need to be prioritized and, when it comes to UHC, there are many tools that can be used to measure how effectively the entire population is being covered. Additionally, a restructuring of health financing models needs to be carried out so that we are less dependent on donor funding, and more self-reliant.

Lastly, ways and means to empower patients need to be found. Technology helps with this, but efforts need to be continued and increased in order to be more patient-centric.

Mr. Dai Hozumi

IntraHealth

IntraHealth recently had an opportunity to work with the governments of Mali and Kenya, along with the WHO, to estimate the number of beds and healthcare workers required at different health facilities. These tools will be publicly available for free. Reach out to Dai at dhozumi@intrahealth.org to access this information.

China's studies from Wuhan demonstrate that more than half of the health workforce are experiencing severe depression, a sense of isolation and helplessness, as well as increasing levels of violence. Seventy percent of health workers are women who are potentially carrying extra burdens at home, sometimes even domestic violence. In order for us to think about the future beyond COVID-19, we need to advocate for sustainable, holistic, gender equity, and safety for health workers.

We often think of just nurses and doctors as frontline workers, but ambulance drivers, receptionists and cleaners are also absolutely essential and need to be supported.



Ms. Violet Njuguna

Safaricom

The vision of Safaricom is to transform lives, including delivering products that have a positive social impact in the health sector, along with education, agriculture and other areas.

Some of the initiatives Safaricom has embarked on during the pandemic include eliminating fees for transactions below 1,000 KES and increasing bandwidth of home internet. They have also set up the 719 Information Center, which is a hotline for COVID-19 information. Another initiative that was established even before the pandemic, called SafariSmart, is a platform that aims to tackle epidemic prevention related to travel.

Safaricom is looking forward to collaborating with other partners that leverage on the strength of the players in this sector.



Dr. Bernard Haufiku

*Advisor to the President of
Namibia*

The issue of continuous communication and coordination of our efforts is essential. We must keep relying on data to respond effectively and strengthen our health systems. Harmonization of laws and regulations on the continent are needed, because different countries need to do things together so our policies and regulation also need to work together. With these two things we will build strong and resilient healthcare systems on the continent.

GUEST SPEAKER

Dr. Alexandre Tiendrebeogo

Acting Director for Universal Health Coverage/Communicable and Noncommunicable Diseases Cluster, WHO



World Health Organization



If we look back over the past five months of the pandemic in Africa, we have seen strong government leadership take necessary actions quickly to prevent the spread of the virus. As countries start to ease restrictions, prevention remains the top priority. Many countries have fragile health systems and have experienced a negative economic impact, which means we can anticipate that funding to the health sector might reduce. This means that effective and efficient management practices are more important than ever.

In order to weather this pandemic, there are several best practices we can build on. Collaboration and a multi-sectoral approach is essential. We need public health capacity, surveillance, testing, and to ensure that health worker skills have been enhanced and communities have been engaged with. The private sector, in particular, has stepped up to contribute strongly to the response including through workplace safety measures, innovation, local production, financial support, and actively building partnerships.

Looking forward, we have the opportunity to harness the ongoing attention on health as a top political agenda to transform and strengthen health systems to be more resilient and focused on primary healthcare. This is about improving the quality of services, expanding access to services and the range of essential services being provided. Interventions need to be put in place to overcome barriers to access, such as through transport services, integrating telemedicine and outreach approaches.

At the WHO regional office for Africa we are framing a new approach in responding to COVID-19 and continuing to strengthen health systems. This is based on the approach of integrated, people-centric care. This is an area where partners can play a key role in supporting service delivery, innovation, and local production of essential supplies.

Together we can mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and save lives.



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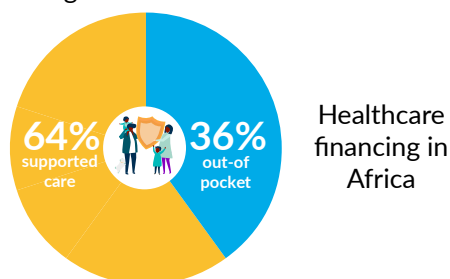
GUEST SPEAKER

Ms. Thokozile Ruzvidzo

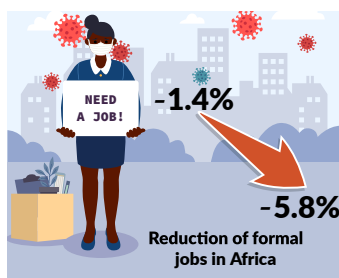
Director, Social Development Policy
Division, UNECA

The sharing of information and experiences has been very rich in these roundtable sessions. These are unprecedented times. We have strained health systems and reeling economies, but we can learn lessons from this pandemic. Business as usual in the recovery is not an option and building back better is a must.

The pandemic is more than a health crisis; it has affected societies and economies at the core, including a lack of progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals. Healthcare on the continent is primarily financed out of pocket (36%) and health affordability becomes a much more serious challenge.



The supply of COVID-19 tests, PPE and pharmaceutical products were restricted significantly during this time. It has exposed Africa's vulnerability when it comes to depending on trade from outside the continent, producing only 2% of the total amount of medications consumed and importing over 70%. The pharmaceutical market as a whole in Africa is worth \$14.5 billion. These figures are making ministries of health and finance pay attention.



Annual formal job creation is expected to drop by between 1.4% and 5.8%. This becomes graver when we consider that between 72% and 86% of the workforce is informal and an estimated 82% of Africans do not have access to social protection. Vulnerable households have an increased risk of 4.2% of staying in poverty for a decade or longer. Long-term effects could include sustained waves of job losses and the destruction of supply chains.

So what does this mean both on the social and the health side of things? Government needs to work much more



United Nations
Economic Commission
for Africa



closely with private sector. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) provides that opportunity. Africa needs to integrate. The AU commission is based on pooled procurement, local production, and quality assurance through the engagement of the private sector. This initiative has shown us that local production is better for Africa in many ways. Kenya's locally produced products were priced at 30% lower and availability was double compared to those that are imported. In Ethiopia, pooled procurement resulted in cost savings of over \$128 million. Self-sufficiency in medicines is critical and a lesson we are learning as a continent. The increase in fiscal space, improved affordability and accessibility of medicines, particularly during COVID-19, through domesticating our response within the AfCFTA is vital. By domesticating our response, we can trade medicines across African borders and produce together. This emphasizes how different countries can complement each other, each capitalizing on what they do best. Initiatives such as the African Medical Supplies platform and the Afriexim financial facility are laudable examples of this.

Social protection schemes have been highlighted as an immediate response to COVID-19. The social protection programs in Africa have been designed to overcome temporary fluctuations. Many tend to have embedded designs that reflect prior socio-economic crises, such as that caused by HIV/AIDS. Along with a combination of political factors, such as embedded designs that have tended to limit their adaptability when it comes to dealing with new shocks, they have limited fiscal efficiency. Therefore, the wide impact that COVID-19 is going to have on Africa demands a rethink of how social protection is carried out in the longer term, so that social protection programs are domesticated within national economies, which will result in resilience when shocks come in the future. We need them to enhance productive capacity, as well as a resource shift, moving away from social assistance and moving towards solidarity and contributory schemes. Our current social assistance programs are not enough.

Both the health system and the poverty that arises when African economies struggle need to be addressed in response to this pandemic.

Event Partners



Mr. Baye Ndiaye
Executive Director, Equally

Equally Africa is part of the new technologies' division of ADS group, with the primary objective of leveraging digital innovations to deliver 'last mile' health care solutions to the

most remote communities of the continent. The company has developed a unique diagnosis offer that is structured around rapid testing and medical check-ups. It is also an aggregator of solutions, devices, and equipment for the continent thanks to strategic partnerships with world-class leaders.

The key challenges highlighted by COVID-19 pandemic include:

- Medical sovereignty challenge, including an over-dependence on foreign supply (from raw materials to finished products)
- Lack of production capacities and capabilities
- Lack of local industrial skills and competences, even if some regions are better equipped today
- Access to initial commodities has proven to be difficult
- Lack of effective cross-border supply capabilities, except in some specific regions (Eastern and Southern Africa)
- Planning disruptions resulting from global trade and transport disruptions
- Equally Africa has a concrete approach to build up a medical supply chain in Africa. The continent is starting from scratch, more or less. Support is needed from regulatory authorities to make things happen. We have to demonstrate that there is a business case for investing and, therefore, convince all companies - from the continent and also big pharma and global manufacturers - that 'Africa is worth it.' So, we need to size the market.

This is the reason why Equally Africa is calling for:

1. Conducting pan-African or at least regional epidemiological studies on most recurrent or specific African diseases and translate results into action plan.
2. Starting an effective fundraising campaign to deliver the proposed action plan and organizing a pan-African conference on how to make healthcare affordable to Africans, which would allow for creating new financing schemes to help people pay for medicines in a proportionate way.
3. Defining a pan-African strategy to create production hubs in the most relevant countries in order to avoid duplications and increase efficiencies.
4. Boosting intra-African healthcare trade thanks to AfCFTA, especially through the key protocols on intellectual and industrial properties under discussion.
5. And finally, engaging into a pan-African effort on standardization of products and certification schemes. Standardization is what we need to allow for mass production. And mass production means mass market.

In conclusion, maybe we can find people as convinced as we are that Africa's medical sovereignty is essential for its development, but that such sovereignty can also result from win-win partnerships. We hope that AHB will help convey that message and initiate this policy-shaping sensitization exercise with governments.



Mr. Niresh Bechan
*General Manager,
Lenmed South Africa*

In some parts of South Africa, like KwaZulu-Natal, the surge is yet to come. Fortunately, because of the swift actions by the President and Minister of Health, the lockdown restrictions have made a positive impact. Lenmed has worked to empower their stakeholders with necessary tools to manage this contagion. Even as there are attempts to manage the severity of this pandemic, people's individual behaviors will dictate how we progress. The effects of the pandemic will last for a very long time. This will demand more changes and more adjusting. We have prepared as best we can, but only time will tell if we are ready.



Mr. Marc Mathews
*Business Development
Ag. Director Africa,
LumiraDX*

At LumiraDX, the overarching philosophy is to support local healthcare, so they have set up a multi-parameter diagnostic platform that is able to run multiple tests. This is high-impact and low-cost as part of the establishment of a primary care model for Africa. Working closely with government and private sector, they have helped design innovative and sustainable models to help achieve universal health coverage.

Rather than distracting from their mission, COVID-19 has added short-term goals to their overarching objectives. They have been careful not to have a vertical, siloed approach to the pandemic, instead capitalizing on opportunities to build integrated, patient-centric diagnostic models at the point of care. Having good diagnostic tools is a critical aspect of the response to COVID-19 and will help prepare us for the next epidemic, as well as managing other disease burdens in Africa.

What we do now is essential when it comes to addressing the current crisis, future pandemics, as well as other illnesses that affect our populations.



Ms. Ada Mwangola

*Director Social & Political Pillars,
Kenya Vision 2030*

Kenya Vision 2030 is a small government institution with a huge mandate to ensure that the implementing agencies are working toward the established goals. In the health sector, universal health coverage was declared by the President as one of his legacy projects, which is a focus of Vision 2030. COVID-19 has caused disruption and Kenya is aware of the social and economic changes that have been brought about by the pandemic. There have been policy changes to create an enabling environment for private sector participation. Vision 2030 works closely with AHB to make these partnerships happen in the health sector.



Mr. Ernest Darkoh

Founding Partner, Broadreach

We're all aware of the gap that currently exists between our disease burden in Africa and the health resources to fight against them. It's important that we keep this at the forefront of our minds as we think about COVID-19. When we ask the question, "what is next?" there might not be a next. We may just need to live with COVID-19 for the long term.

Given the gaps we have, we need to be more innovative, creative, and effective than anywhere else on the planet. We can't learn from outside the continent because they have more resources than us and are yet still struggling. We need to leverage technology and data. We need good leadership, management and governance, with the right data and the right insights, to make the right decisions at the right time.

BroadReach is working on getting the needed data to leaders so that they can make informed and wise decisions, helping us maximize our scarce resources.



Mr. Karim Bendhaou

Head of Africa Bureau, Merck

Africa needs to ensure equal access to the vaccine as soon as it is created. The only way we can ensure this is to have fit and finish units available across Africa. We have 18 months to prepare this and it's essential that we do. There is a strong business case for this; it is very profitable.

The disruption of our supply chain has taught us that the way we have brought in supplies in the past is no longer sustainable. We need to establish resource hubs throughout the continent where essential medication is stored.



Ms. Justine Coulson

*Deputy Regional Director
for UNFPA in East and
South Africa, UNFPA*

UNFPA believes that, despite the horror of COVID-19, there are fundamental shifts in partnerships and ways of working in health systems that present a unique opportunity to build back better. This pandemic is one of many crises across the continent. However, because it is a global issue, governments have been much more agile than normal, partnerships have formed quickly, and innovation is happening very organically. There is a risk that if we don't take stock of that and evaluate what's been most effective, we will miss the chance to take these experiences to scale to transform the health system.

UNFPA focuses on social and reproductive, women's and young people's health. We are seeing clear evidence of falling back on key sexual and reproductive health services. The number of women coming to facilities has dropped by 10% in just one month. We are at risk of seeing a backsliding of progress in other areas of health. If we can harness the movement around universal health coverage and new approaches to health insurance and bring private sector partners on board, we have a much better opportunity to ensure sustainability in primary healthcare and sexual and reproductive health services.



Mr. Kwasi Boahene

*Director of West Africa and Director of Advocacy,
PharmAccess*

COVID-19 is a wakeup call for all of us to come together and do something transformational. The game changer is the use of mobile technology to improve our health systems. Africa shows 7% of GDP transactions are through mobile phones (compared to only 2% in Europe and the US). PharmAccess is capitalizing on this technology and has set up a digital service to monitor COVID-19 symptoms and allow service providers to care for patients digitally.

PharmAccess is also supporting the training of healthcare providers so that they will be able to control infection and ensure quality care is delivered. Health financing is also important and they are working with governments on creative ways to provide insurance. The government of Lagos State, for example, has agreed to subsidize insurance for its citizens.

The impact of COVID-19 on the business of healthcare providers is significant, so PharmAccess is offering affordable loans to help health businesses cope with the impact of COVID-19.

PharmAccess is willing to engage with others beyond this webinar to find solutions.



Ms. Furhat Peerun

*Territory Manager, Sub-Saharan
Africa, Public Sector, Amazon
Web Services (AWS)*

The common effort is towards building collaboration between public and private sectors and AWS will continue building toward this in Africa, where they have been supporting the health sector through telemedicine, self-reporting and contact tracing interventions. As a technology enabler, AWS wants to help Africa become self-sufficient. Health infrastructure has been negatively impacted during this pandemic, so AWS is working to support public and private health sectors to gather and use information in order to make well-informed decisions, even beyond COVID-19.



Ms. Elena Graeff

*Business Development
Manager Life & Health
Reinsurance, Middle East
& Africa, AXA*

COVID-19 is a significant challenge, but there is clearly a need to improve health systems. Africa faces multiple disease burdens, but what is most important now is to build a very strong health system to address the pandemic, but also other significant health challenges.



Ms. Jitka Stranska

Managing Director MEA, Linet

During this challenging time, many countries were not properly prepared with sufficient hospital equipment, especially in ICUs, prior to this pandemic. All of the sudden, demand increased with the rise of COVID-19, and facilities were forced to purchase whatever was on the market on short notice without being able to assess the quality or sustainability of the products. There have been some sub-optimal investments, which is a worrying sign for the future. We need to prepare now to be ready for future challenges and Linet wants to support sustainable initiatives alongside partners.



Mr. Mervyn George

Strategic Advisor, SAP

SAP is a global technology firm that works to make the world run better and improve people's lives. Their engagement with partners, stakeholders and customers during this difficult time has been to support them to succeed in spite of challenges. This includes supporting in areas of understanding cash flow, staff wellbeing, patient experience and so on. Their current focus is on helping companies and organizations rebuild and become more profitable, climate friendly, sustainable and to future proof themselves against similar challenges that may come. SAP has intelligence solutions that impact the healthcare sector directly and looks forward to sharing more about that in future webinars.



Tebogo Mphake

CEO, Sakhiwo Health Solutions

Sakhiwo Health Solutions has been involved in ensuring that Africa's infrastructure is able to cope with the pandemic, not only the current situation, but also any future pandemics. It needs to be flexible and resilient. Sakhiwo is looking forward to building more collaborative capabilities with their clients and governments.



Ms. Renuka Gadde,

Vice President, Global Health, BD

BD has been around for over 100 years and in Africa for over 50 years, in which they have seen the impact of many viruses on the continent. They make diagnostic solutions and devices and have recently launched a rapid test that can give patients a result in 15 minutes.

Now is the time to foster collaboration, come together and form partnerships. BD has a rich legacy of public-private partnerships, which are the best way to implement lasting change, now more than ever, as we're looking at COVID-19 and beyond. BD is excited to continue working in Africa alongside partners.



Ruben Vellenga

Partnership Specialist, SDG Partnership Platform

Now more than ever, the Sustainable Development Goals are very relevant, underscoring multi-stakeholder partnerships. Everyone needs to stand in solidarity. We have the opportunity to leverage the power of many stakeholders, both those gathered here and beyond. We should look ahead with optimism, because a promising future is possible.

As we move forward, we should never lose sight of those furthest left behind. We need to have equity and the most vulnerable at the center of any solution.



Dr. Steve Adudans

CEO, MediQuip

MediQuip has two social enterprises addressing health needs in Sub-Saharan Africa. One aims to increase access to affordable, safe medical oxygen with a doorstep delivery model. This was endorsed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and has successfully disrupted challenges of distribution, oxygen generation and utilization.

MediQuip Global is a social enterprise which works in medical equipment procurement, installation and maintenance. This is important because 70% of medical devices that are donated in Sub-Saharan Africa end up not being used, landing instead in a medical equipment "graveyard." How do we ensure these do not go to waste? That medical facilities have access to affordable parts? That medical devices have an actual impact on saving lives? We need to make sure the manufacturers of these devices overseas understand the infrastructural needs of the location where their product is going to be installed and used.

They look forward to sharing further in a future webinar about how to improve the effective utilization of medical equipment.



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