



## Session Four: Recognising African Leaders In Advancing Women's Health On The Continent

Women in Africa are the pillars of their families and communities. They serve as the lifegivers, mothers, peacemakers, entrepreneurs, and the providers of care for children and the elderly. However, they bear a disproportionately large share of the global disease burden and death.

Women in the African region face a daunting range of threats to their health throughout their lives: respiratory infections, perinatal conditions, diarrhoeal diseases, malaria childhood-cluster diseases, nutritional deficiencies, meningitis, HIV/AIDS, other STDs, maternal conditions, cardiovascular diseases, malignant neoplasms, tropical-cluster diseases, neuropsychiatric conditions, genitourinary diseases, diabetes mellitus, endocrine disorders and more.

It is therefore crucial that we protect and promote the health of women on the continent - with a focus on quality, affordability, and equity - for the wellbeing and development of both current and future generations. Additionally, significant socioeconomic benefits can be derived from improving women's healthcare in Africa. Representing over 50% of a continent's human resources, women's health in Africa also has major implications on the overall development of Africa.

**Women in Africa are more likely to die from communicable diseases (e.g. HIV, tuberculosis and malaria), maternal and perinatal conditions, and nutritional deficiencies, than women in other regions of the world.**

### Continued Advocacy Is Needed

Progress has been made over the past decade, with the help of champions that have influenced events and opinions in favour of women's health - strengthening the agenda of women's health on the continent. As an example, in sub-Saharan Africa, several countries have halved their levels of maternal mortality over the last two decades.

This includes policy makers and senior government officials, representatives of local and international nongovernmental organisations, UN agencies, civil society, communities, media organisations, pro-women activists, trade unions, professional associations, health workers, economists, sociologists, academics, research institutions and the business community. Advocacy can play an important role in encouraging political commitment at the highest level possible.

**Women in Africa bear a disproportionately large share of the global disease burden and death. In this, leadership is everything.**



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## The Session

The session seeks to recognise leaders who have radically improved health indicators, visibility, and the positioning of women in Africa. These champions can be found in all sub-sectors of Africa's healthcare system; the private, public and development sectors.

### Key areas of discussion will be:

- Challenges and lessons learnt in promoting women's health on the continent
- Success stories and wins made in advancing the health of women
- Promotion of good leadership through recognising and rewarding champions in the areas of women's health and development.

