

Program for AHETI Convening

Theme: Uniting Faith and Science to Eliminate Cervical Cancer in Africa
Dates: June 11th - 13th, 2024 **Location:** Radisson Blu Hotel,
Nairobi

Day 1: See - Understanding Issues Morning

Session:

Opening Session (8:30 AM - 9:10 AM)

- Welcome Remarks and Introduction to Convening
 - AHETI Chair – Fr Charlie Chilufya &
 - Kilele/ACHA Director – Ms Benda Kithaka

- Messages of goodwill from partners and key stakeholders
 - The Faith Community
 - Fr Germain Rajoelison – SECAM
 - Imam Alidou Ilboudo - Moslem
 - African Religions – P
 - The Community and Survivors
 - Karen Nakawala (Survivors)
 - Pamela Savai
 - Government

Keynote Address: A Call to Action: Uniting Faith and Science for a Cervical Cancer-Free Future in Africa" – Bishop Cleophas Oseso Tuka, KCCB Health and Integral Human Developmentn (tbc)

Panel Discussion: Overview of Cervical Cancer and HPV Vaccination and WHO 90-70-90 Strategy in Africa (9:10AM – 10:00 AM)

- Dr Paul Bloem – WHO HQ Geneva (Virtual)
- Prof Mugo – KEMRI
- Dr Sharon Kapambwe WHO Afro
- Prof Mulindi Mwanahamuntu – University of Zambia

This segment is one of the cornerstones of our program, designed to deepen participants' understanding of the pervasive challenge of cervical cancer across the continent and to explore the ambitious WHO 90-70-90 elimination strategy. The strategy's targets—90% of girls vaccinated by age 15, 70% of women screened by ages 35 and 45, and 90% of women with cervical disease receiving treatment—outline a comprehensive approach to combating this disease. This panel discussion will bring together leading experts to share insights, progress, and challenges specific to various African contexts. By examining both successes and obstacles, this session aims to equip participants with the knowledge and strategies needed to advocate for and implement effective cervical cancer control programs in their respective regions. The discussion is intended to foster an informed dialogue that will propel action and collaboration towards meeting these critical health targets.

Coffee Break (10:00 AM - 10:30 AM)

Panel 2: Cervical Cancer in Africa: Current Landscape, HPV Vaccination, and Barriers to Uptake – Insights from the Field (10:30. – 11:30)

- Dr Rob Symes – Foretell. AI
- Theo Sowa - Chief Executive Officer of the African Women’s Development Fund.
- Prof Themba Gininza – University of Kwazulu Natal, South Africa
- Dr Rose E. Jalang'o – MoH Kenya

This essential panel of the convening’s program is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of cervical cancer in Africa, delving into the specifics of HPV vaccination rates and the obstacles that hinder effective vaccine uptake. The session aims to furnish attendees with a detailed understanding of both the epidemiological landscape and the practical challenges faced in expanding vaccine coverage.

- **Educational Foundation:** This segment sets the educational groundwork for the convening by presenting up-to-date data and research findings. Understanding the current landscape of cervical cancer and the status of HPV vaccination efforts across different African regions is crucial for all subsequent discussions and strategy formations.
- **Contextual Relevance:** By highlighting specific barriers to HPV vaccine uptake, the session provides contextual relevance that helps tailor the discussions towards realistic and effective solutions. It emphasises the need for region-specific strategies that consider local cultural, economic, and systemic challenges.
- **Evidence-Based Insights:** Featuring evidence from recent studies and field reports, this segment ensures that all discussions and decisions during the conference are grounded in the latest scientific research and real-world experiences. This approach fosters informed dialogue and decision-making.
- **Catalyst for Collaboration:** Understanding shared challenges can serve as a catalyst for fostering collaboration among stakeholders, including faith leaders policymakers, healthcare providers, community leaders, and international health organizations. The segment encourages a collective examination of problems and joint strategising for overcoming barriers.
- **Strategic Planning:** Insights from this session are intended to directly feed into the strategic planning discussions that follow in the program. By clearly delineating the challenges and the current state of affairs, the session equips participants with the necessary information to devise effective, actionable strategies during subsequent workshops and discussions.

Panel Presentation and Discussion: Addressing Religious and Cultural Concerns in Vaccine Acceptance (11:30 – 12:30).

- Rev Dr. Sr Teresa Kiragu – Bio Ethicist and Theologian
- Rev Dr Pascal Mwakio - Bio Ethicist and Theologian
- [Imam Alidou Ilboudo - Religious Leader](#)
- Rev Dr Sr Mary Nzilani, – Pastoral Theologian

Panel Description

This panel presentation is a pivotal part of the program, designed to delve into the complex interplay between cultural and religious beliefs and the acceptance of vaccines. By bringing together religious leaders, cultural scholars, and public health experts, this session aims to foster a nuanced dialogue about the concerns and hesitations that different communities may have regarding vaccination.

Role in the Program:

- **Facilitating Understanding:** This segment is instrumental in helping participants understand the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds that influence perceptions and attitudes toward vaccination. It emphasises the importance of empathy and cultural competence in public health initiatives.
- **Bridging Gaps:** The session serves as a bridge between medical science and cultural/religious practices, exploring how public health professionals can respectfully and effectively engage with communities holding various beliefs.
- **Strategy Development:** Insights gained from this discussion will be critical for developing more effective communication strategies that resonate with target populations, helping to increase vaccine uptake through culturally sensitive approaches.
- **Enhancing Outreach:** By addressing these concerns openly, the panel aims to equip health professionals and policymakers with the tools and knowledge necessary to enhance their outreach efforts, ensuring that vaccine campaigns are inclusive and considerate of the diverse societal fabric.
- **Community Engagement:** The insights from this panel are expected to foster stronger community engagement by building trust and understanding, crucial elements for successful public health campaigns.

This session is designed not only to address and discuss cultural and religious concerns but also to translate these discussions into actionable insights that can lead to improved health outcomes. By understanding and integrating the perspectives shared during this panel, health initiatives can be more effectively tailored to meet the needs and expectations of diverse communities.

Interactive Plenary: Guided Reflection and Examen on the Morning Sessions (12:30 AM - 1:00 PM)**Fr Charlie Chilufya, S.J. Session****Description:**

This interactive plenary session is designed to provide participants with a structured opportunity to reflect on and digest the key discussions and insights from the morning's activities. Utilising a guided dialogue format, this session encourages a deeper engagement with the topics covered, fostering an environment where participants can share their thoughts and refine their understanding of the issues discussed.

Role in the Program:

- **Consolidation of Learning:** This session acts as a crucial juncture to consolidate and reinforce the knowledge gained during the morning sessions. It allows participants to pause and reflect, ensuring that they fully grasp and appreciate the complexities of the topics addressed.
- **Enhanced Participant Interaction:** By encouraging participants to share their reflections and insights, the session enhances interaction among attendees, building a stronger sense of community and collaborative learning.
- **Facilitation of Deeper Understanding:** The guided discussion helps clarify any uncertainties and explore the implications of the morning's content more deeply. This is crucial for ensuring that participants can effectively apply what they have learned in their own contexts.

- **Preparation for Subsequent Sessions:** This reflective process not only solidifies the morning's learning but also prepares participants for the afternoon sessions by setting a thoughtful, engaged tone. It ensures that they are mentally and intellectually ready to tackle the next set of challenges and discussions.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** The interactive nature of this plenary provides the conference organisers with immediate feedback on the morning's sessions, which can be used to adjust the pace or focus of the conference in real-time if necessary.

The session aims to maximise the educational impact of the event and enhance the overall participant experience. It provides a valuable space for intellectual engagement, personal growth, and communal learning, ensuring that the conference's goals are met with thoughtful consideration and active participation.

Lunch Break (1:00 PM - 2:30 PM)

Breakout Sessions: Thematic Problem Definition and Analysis (2:30 PM - 4:00 PM)

Segment Description

This session is a key component of the convening, designed to delve deeply into specific thematic areas that are critical to the overall goals of the event. Participants will split into smaller, focus-driven groups, each dedicated to a particular theme relevant to the broader topic of the conference. The primary aim is to foster a collaborative environment where diverse perspectives can converge to identify and analyze key challenges.

Role in the Program:

- **Focused Discussion:** Each breakout group focuses on a specific theme, allowing for a more concentrated and detailed exploration of issues than would be possible in larger plenary sessions. This setting encourages more direct interaction and active participation from all attendees.
- **Problem Identification:** Groups are tasked with clearly defining the problems within their assigned theme. This involves discussing and detailing the nature of these issues, their origins, and the impacts they have on broader goals.
- **Analytical Approach:** Following problem identification, participants engage in critical analysis to understand the underlying factors and potential barriers that contribute to these issues. This step is crucial for developing effective solutions.
- **Collaborative Environment:** The breakout format is designed to leverage the collective expertise of participants, promoting a synergistic approach to problem-solving. This environment fosters networking and the formation of potential partnerships for future collaboration.
- **Outcome Orientation:** Each group is expected to produce a concise summary of their discussions, including the identified problems and the insights gained from their analysis. These summaries will be shared in a subsequent plenary session to ensure that insights are exchanged across the entire assembly of participants.

This segment is instrumental in shaping the convening's outcomes by ensuring that all discussions are grounded in a thorough understanding of the specific challenges being addressed. It sets the stage for the next phase of the conference, where strategies and solutions will be developed based on the problems and analyses articulated during these sessions.

1. Knowledge Collaboration: Bridging Science and Faith in HPV Vaccination

Lead Presentations by Prof Dorcas Obiri-Yeboha and Dr Armel Setubi – Oncologist

Description: This session aims to foster a deep and productive dialogue between cultural, religious communities, and the scientific community regarding the HPV vaccination. The primary focus is on identifying and understanding the specific cultural and religious challenges to HPV vaccination and cervical cancer prevention across Africa. Additionally, this session will feature presentations from medical and scientific experts who will share the latest research and scientific advancements related to HPV, its vaccine, and the strategies for effective cervical cancer prevention.

Participants will explore:

- **Latest HPV Science:** Experts will present current scientific knowledge on HPV, discussing vaccine safety, efficacy, and the public health implications of widespread vaccination.
- **Cultural Beliefs and Practices:** Examination of how existing cultural norms influence perceptions and acceptance of HPV vaccination, identifying both supportive and hindering factors.
- **Religious Influences:** Discussion on the impact of religious beliefs on health behaviours, and strategies for engaging faith leaders as advocates for health education and vaccination.

The session will also highlight case studies and models from different African regions where integration of scientific understanding with cultural and religious considerations has led to successful health outcomes. By combining the latest scientific insights with a sensitive approach to cultural and religious contexts, the session aims to equip participants with the knowledge and tools to advocate for and implement HPV vaccination programs more effectively in their communities.

2. Community-Centric Advocacy for HPV Vaccination: Identifying Challenges in Africa

Lead Presentations by:

- **Benda Kithaka – Kilele Health/ACHA**
- **Dr Viviane Oke – Youth for Youth**

Description: This session delves into the multifaceted landscape of HPV communication and advocacy across Africa, with a focus on uncovering the predominant challenges that impede effective vaccination efforts and cervical cancer prevention. Participants will critically assess how various cultural, ethical, and spiritual perspectives within African communities influence public health messaging and advocacy initiatives. The goal is to identify specific barriers that obstruct informed decision-making and hinder public health advancements concerning HPV vaccination.

The discussion will:

- **Highlight Regional Variations:** Explore how different African regions face unique challenges and how local customs and beliefs impact HPV vaccine acceptance.
- **Engage with Diverse Perspectives:** Include insights from cultural leaders, healthcare professionals, and community advocates to provide a well-rounded view of the obstacles encountered in different communities.
- **Interactive Problem-Solving:** Facilitate interactive problem-solving sessions where participants can propose and critique potential solutions, fostering a collaborative approach to advocacy.
- **Actionable Outcomes:** Conclude with actionable recommendations for community-specific strategies that can be implemented to improve HPV vaccination rates and drive progress in cervical cancer prevention.

By thoroughly understanding these challenges and crafting advocacy approaches that resonate with community values, the session aims to empower participants to advocate more effectively for HPV vaccination, ultimately contributing to significant public health improvements across Africa.

3. Vaccine Integrity in Africa: Addressing Quality Assurance Challenges for HPV Vaccination Uptake

Description: This session delves into the multifaceted quality assurance issues impacting HPV vaccination programs across Africa, scrutinizing how regulatory frameworks, supply chain management, counterfeit vaccines, surveillance, and monitoring, as well as technical capacities, influence vaccine efficacy, safety, and public trust. The discussion will provide a critical assessment of government actions and their role in bolstering vaccine quality assurance, exploring a variety of measures and initiatives that have been put in place to address these challenges.

Participants will:

- **Examine Regulatory and Compliance Frameworks:** Analyse how robust or lacking regulatory frameworks impact the quality and distribution of HPV vaccines.
- **Explore Supply Chain Vulnerabilities:** Discuss the complexities of vaccine supply chain management in Africa, identifying key points where vulnerabilities may compromise vaccine integrity.
- **Counteract Counterfeit Vaccines:** Consider strategies to combat the prevalence of counterfeit vaccines, which pose significant risks to public health and trust.
- **Enhance Surveillance and Monitoring Systems:** Evaluate the effectiveness of current surveillance and monitoring systems, and discuss how these can be improved to ensure vaccine safety and efficacy.
- **Address Technical and Resource Limitations:** Discuss the technical challenges and resource limitations faced by various countries, impacting their ability to maintain vaccine quality.
- **Impact of International Dependence and Funding:** Delve into how dependence on international vaccines and funding constraints affect local capacities to manage quality assurance.
- **Interactive Discussions and Strategy Development:** Engage in interactive discussions to develop actionable strategies that can be adopted to strengthen the vaccine quality assurance systems.

The session will help to build a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and will have practical steps and innovative strategies aimed at overcoming these barriers. The ultimate goal is to enhance the vaccination framework across Africa, establish widespread public trust, and significantly increase HPV vaccine uptake by ensuring that all vaccine options meet the highest international standards of safety and efficacy.

Coffee Break (4:00 PM - 4:30 PM)

Plenary: Integrative Reporting and Collaborative Discussion (4:30 PM - 6:00 PM) (4:30 PM - 6:00 PM)

Session Description:

This crucial plenary session serves as a culmination of the day's discussions and workshops, providing a platform for representatives from various breakout sessions to report back to the entire assembly. The session is designed to foster a comprehensive exchange of insights and

strategies that have emerged throughout the day, promoting a unified understanding and collaborative approach to tackling the challenges discussed.

Structure and Objectives:

- **Reporting Back:** Designated speakers from each breakout session will present summaries of their group's discussions, highlighting key challenges identified and any new insights on the issues discussed. This ensures that all participants, regardless of their individual session participations, are informed about the breadth of discussions that took place.
- **Facilitated Discussion:** Following the presentations, a facilitated discussion will allow participants to delve deeper into the issues raised, ask questions, and offer feedback. This interactive segment is crucial for refining ideas and integrating diverse perspectives.
- **Synthesis of Ideas:** The facilitator will help synthesize the information shared, identifying common themes and divergent views, and discussing how these can be harmonised into cohesive strategies moving forward.
- **Action Steps:** The session will conclude with a discussion on potential action steps and commitments that can be taken collectively or by individual entities to advance the goals discussed during the conference.

Role in the Program:

This Plenary is pivotal as it not only ensures that insights from parallel sessions are shared broadly but also facilitates collective reflection and consensus-building. By the end of this session, participants will have a clearer understanding of the conference's comprehensive insights and understanding of issues, enabling them to consider practical applications and collaborations post-conference. This session is integral in ensuring that the momentum generated throughout the day is captured, actionable outcomes are defined, and participants leave with a sense of accomplishment and direction.

Downtime (6:00PM – 7:00PM)

Evening:

- **Networking Dinner** (7:00 to 8:30 PM)