

# 3<sup>RD</sup> HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

Theme: **Advancing global and regional health climate action – bridging research, policy, and implementation for universal health coverage**

Date: **15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

Venue: **Machakos International Convention Centre (MICC), Machakos County.**

## 1.0 Background and Rationale

### 1.1 Background:

Across Africa, a complex interplay between climate change and health outcomes poses a significant obstacle to achieving both Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>1</sup>. The continent bears a disproportionate burden of climate-related health threats, including air pollution, heat stress, vector-borne diseases like malaria and dengue fever, food insecurity, and mental health issues<sup>2</sup>. These threats further strain already limited healthcare resources, jeopardizing access to essential services, particularly for vulnerable populations like children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing conditions<sup>3</sup>.

With the shifting global landscape, initiatives like the COP26 Health Commitments, the World Health Organization's Alliance on Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH), the COP28 Climate and Health Declaration, and the New WHA77 Climate and Health Resolution signify a growing recognition of the inextricable link between climate and health<sup>4</sup>. These efforts backed by robust leadership and governance underscore the importance of building resilient health systems and transitioning to low-carbon healthcare delivery models to ensure long-term sustainability.

Despite this international momentum, translating these ambitions into tangible action within African countries remains a significant hurdle. The field of climate and health research in Africa is in its early stages, lacking robust funding and hindering progress in developing evidence-based solutions. To effectively address these complex challenges, a transdisciplinary approach that fosters collaboration between researchers, policymakers, and practitioners is crucial<sup>5</sup>. Such an approach can bridge the knowledge gap and lead to the development of context-specific solutions for Kenya and Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> Theron, M. M., Burton, J. P., & Zvous, D. S. (2022). The impact of climate change on child health in Africa: A systematic review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(3), 1718. <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/20/4/3425>

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. (n.d.). Climate Change and Health. <https://www.who.int/health-topics/climate-change>

<sup>3</sup> Opoku, A. R., Ankomah, A. P., & Drechsel, P. (2021). Climate change and health in sub-Saharan Africa: Emerging threats and opportunities for adaptation. *Environmental Research*, 199, 111219. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33925753/>

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organization. (2021). COP26 Health Programmes. <https://www.who.int/initiatives/alliance-for-transformative-action-on-climate-and-health/cop26-health-programme>

<sup>5</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2020). Transdisciplinary Research for Sustainable Societies: Challenges and Opportunities. <https://www.oecd.org/science/addressing-societal-challenges-using-transdisciplinary-research-0ca0ca45-en.htm>

The 3rd Health and Climate Change Conference serves as a vital platform to address these critical issues. By emphasizing health resilience and adaptation, the conference will facilitate knowledge sharing, collaboration, and the development of action-oriented solutions. This focus aligns with the growing global recognition of the importance of health within climate change discourses and directly addresses the specific needs of African countries in building a more resilient future. In Kenya, a huge opportunity has now been made available, following the development of a new Climate Change and Health Strategy 2024-2029, which has prioritized climate and health research.

## **1.2 Rationale of The Conference**

Building on the momentum generated by the 2nd Health and Climate Change Conference in Kenya and its call to action, the 3rd conference takes a critical step forward by fostering enhanced communication and collaboration across sectors. This is a key aspect in tackling the intricate challenges at the intersection of climate change and health outcomes in Kenya and Africa at large.

The conference recognizes the importance of bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders. Researchers, policymakers from national and county levels, and professionals from public health, environmental and environmental health scientists, critical infrastructure sectors like roads and housing, water, agriculture and energy sectors, civil societies, and development partners will all be represented. This cross-sectoral collaboration is essential. By facilitating communication and knowledge exchange between these often-siloed groups, the conference aims to translate valuable research findings into actionable UHC strategies that effectively address climate challenges and ensure equitable access to healthcare.

The conference acknowledges the significant developments that have taken place on a global and regional level. These include the WHA77 New Climate Change and Health Resolution, the WHA76 resolution on the impact of chemicals, waste, and pollution on human health, the COP 28 Declaration on climate and health, the African inter-ministerial declaration for ACS 23, the Kenya Health and Climate Change Conference (Diani 2023) call to action and the UNEP/EA.6/L.13 draft resolution that was proposed at the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6). These advancements highlight a growing commitment to addressing climate change and its impact on health.

The Machakos Conference serves as a unique platform for collaborative knowledge exchange. It will allow implementors, beneficiaries, researchers, policymakers, and others representing health, environment, energy, and climate change to showcase successful initiatives and brainstorm solutions. This exchange will focus on how various commitments can be utilized collaboratively to improve and sustain primary healthcare. Ultimately, the goal is to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) while ensuring healthcare resources aren't diverted to respond to climate threats and that the systems are resilient enough to withstand the evolving threats posed by climate change.

By fostering collaboration across sectors in Kenya, and within the African countries, the conference aims to bridge the gap between knowledge, policy, and action. This will be crucial in developing effective strategies to protect public health and achieve and sustain UHC in a changing climate.

## **2.0 Purpose**

### **2.1 Conference objectives:**

1. Translate and outline practical strategies for integrating climate considerations into Universal Health Coverage (UHC) plans in Kenya, in response to the COP26 climate and health commitments and the Call to Action highlighted by the New WHA77 climate and health Resolution.
2. Map out actionable recommendations for financing mechanisms to support climate-resilient health systems and Universal Health Coverage (UHC) strategies specifically for Kenya and Africa, aligned with the upcoming COP29 discussions on climate finance.
3. Explore low carbon healthcare strategies aligned with the WHA76 resolution on the impact of chemicals, waste, and pollution on human health and the UNEP/EA.6/L.13 Resolution on Air Pollution.
4. Foster collaboration and partnerships across sectors and countries to contribute to achieving the goals outlined in the African Inter-ministerial Declaration for ACS 23, ensuring Kenya's contribution to a unified and impactful African response to climate and health challenges.

### **2.2 Conference outcomes:**

1. A concrete set of financing recommendations informing COP29 discussions. These recommendations will highlight the specific need for funding mechanisms that support climate-resilient health systems and UHC strategies in Kenya and Africa at large.
2. Development of a practical framework for integrating climate considerations into UHC plans in Kenya. This framework will be presented to the WHO African Regional Office and can be integrated into Kenya's climate and health work planning, the next WHO Programme of Work, particularly influencing the WHO regional Climate Change and Health work plan.
3. A collaborative action plan outlining specific steps to translate the COP28 Declaration principles and the new climate and health resolution into tangible actions for UHC strategies in Kenya. This plan will be disseminated to relevant stakeholders for implementation.
4. Establishment of a cross-sectoral and regional collaboration platform including initiation of the Kenya climate and environmental health Research hub for stakeholders to share best practices, resources, and expertise in addressing climate and health challenges within UHC strategies.
5. A set of implementable strategies aligned with the UNEP/EA.6/L.13 Draft Resolution on Air Pollution. These strategies will focus on improving air quality in all 47 Counties in Kenya, ultimately contributing towards the reduction of climate-related health burdens in Africa.

### 3.0 Scope of the conference

This conference serves as a critical platform to explore the multifaceted challenges and opportunities arising from the intersection of climate change and health in Kenya. Through in-depth discussions on a range of pertinent topics, participants will gain the necessary knowledge and tools to effectively address these issues. The overarching goal is to strengthen health systems not only in Kenya but throughout Africa, ensuring equitable access to healthcare and safeguarding the health of all populations in a changing climate.

The conference adopts a thematic structure, featuring dedicated tracks and targeted session topics. This approach fosters focused discussions, knowledge exchange, and the generation of actionable recommendations. These recommendations will be instrumental in achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) within the context of a changing climate.

#### **Track 1: Financing and Building Climate-Resilient Health Systems:**

***Outcome:** A concrete set of financing recommendations for COP29 discussions, highlighting specific needs for climate-resilient health systems and UHC strategies in Kenya and Africa.*

- **Session 1.1: Unlocking Kenya's Innovative Financing Mechanisms for Health and Climate Change:** Public-Private Partnerships, Dedicated Climate and Health Funds, and Green Bonds
- **Session 1.2: Building Early Warning, Early Action Systems for Health:** Investing in Climate-Resilient Health Infrastructure and Early Warning Systems for Climate-Related Health Threats
- **Session 1.3: Equipping Healthcare for a Changing Climate:** Financing Climate-Smart Technologies and Capacity Building for Healthcare Professionals
- **Session 1.4: Strengthening Disease Surveillance in a Warming World:** Financial Mechanisms to Support Robust Disease Surveillance Systems for Climate-Sensitive Health Issues

#### **Track 2: Integrating Climate resilient and low carbon strategies to UHC**

***Outcome:** Development of a practical framework for integrating climate considerations into UHC plans for Kenya. This framework can be presented to the WHO and integrated into the Draft Decision on Climate Change and Health for Africa*

- **Session 2.1: Climate Risk Assessments for Informed UHC Planning:** Integrating Climate Risk Assessments into National and County UHC Plans
- **Session 2.2: Adapting Health Service Delivery to a Changing Climate:** Developing Climate-Sensitive Health Service Delivery Models for Improved Accessibility and Effectiveness
- **Session 2.3: Building Stockpiles and Training for Emergencies:** Financing and Implementing Strategies for Stockpiling Essential Medical Supplies and Training Health Workers in Emergency Preparedness and Response for Climate-Induced Disasters

### Track 3: Cross-Sectoral Collaboration for Climate and Health Action

**Outcome:** *A collaborative action plan outlining specific steps to translate the COP28 Declaration principles into tangible actions for UHC strategies in Kenya. This plan will be disseminated to relevant stakeholders for implementation. Additionally, establishing a cross-sectoral and regional collaboration platform (Outcome from this theme) strengthens African response.*

- **Session 3.1: From Silos to Synergy:** Fostering Collaboration between Sectors - Effective collaboration strategies between health, environment, finance, infrastructure, and other relevant sectors to address climate and health challenges within UHC strategies.
- **Session 3.2: Healthy Cities for a Healthy Future:** Integrating Climate Considerations into Urban Planning for Improved Health Outcomes
- **Session 3.3: Powering Up Health Facilities with Sustainable Energy:** Promoting Sustainable Energy Access for Healthcare Facilities to Ensure Uninterrupted Service Delivery and Reduce Environmental Impact
- **Session 3.4: Empowering Communities for Climate Resilience:** Strategies for Empowering Local Communities to Participate in Decision-Making Processes and Contribute to Climate Adaptation Efforts for Health

### Track 4: Gender-Sensitive Health Solutions in a Changing Climate

**Outcome:** *Improved understanding of the specific needs of vulnerable populations and the development of targeted health interventions in Kenya. This contributes to strengthening African response through a more inclusive UHC approach.*

- **Session 4.1: Protecting the Vulnerable:** Addressing Gender Disparities in Climate-Related Health Impacts- Tailoring health interventions to address the specific needs of women, children, and other marginalized groups.
- **Session 4.2: Building Resilience from the Ground Up:** Promoting Community-Based Adaptation Strategies that Empower Women to Protect Their Health and Well-being in a Changing Climate
- **Session 4.3: Learning from “the land” Kenya:** Integrating Indigenous Knowledge for Climate Adaptation- Integrating Indigenous knowledge and practices into climate adaptation strategies for health, fostering knowledge exchange between traditional healers and scientific experts.

### Track 5: Technology and Communication for Climate and Health Action

**Outcome:** *Enhanced capacity to leverage technology for preparedness, early warning, service delivery, and communication. This strengthens resilience and public engagement in climate action for health. (This theme explores tools to improve UHC effectiveness in a changing climate).*

- **Session 5.1: Digital Tools for Climate Preparedness:** Exploring the Use of Digital Tools, Telemedicine, and Data Analytics to Enhance Climate Preparedness, Early Warning Systems, and Health Service Delivery in Remote Areas
- **Session 5.2: Communicating the Climate-Health Nexus:** Developing Effective Communication Strategies to Raise Awareness about the Interconnectedness of Climate Change and Health Outcomes
- **Session 5.3: Mobilizing Action for a Healthy Planet:** Utilizing Media Campaigns and Educational Initiatives to Mobilize Public Support for Climate Action that Protects Health

## Track 6: Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning

***Outcome:** Robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks and a knowledge-sharing platform for best practices. This allows for continuous improvement and adaptation of UHC strategies in a changing climate. (This track Monitors progress ensuring effective implementation of strategies aligned with all other thematic areas/objectives)*

- **Session 6.1: Tracking Progress for Improved Outcomes:** Developing Robust Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Frameworks to Track Progress on Implementing Climate-Resilient UHC Strategies in Kenya
- **Session 6.2: Sharing Knowledge, Building Resilience:** Establishing Knowledge-Sharing Platforms for Best Practices in Implementing Climate-Resilient UHC Strategies Across Kenya and Africa.
- **Session 6.3: Learning from Each Other:** Facilitating Knowledge Exchange and South-to-South Collaboration -Fostering dialogue and collaboration between Kenya and other African nations to share lessons learned and accelerate progress towards climate-resilient health systems for UHC.

### 4.0 Targeted Audience:

The 3rd Health and Climate Change Conference seeks to assemble up to 1000 distinguished audience with a shared commitment to fortifying healthcare systems and safeguarding public health in Kenya and across other African countries in the face of climate change. Key audience segments include:

- **Health Sector Leadership:** National and county health ministry policymakers, public health professionals (Environmental Health Specialists, Community Health Workers, medical officers, epidemiologists), healthcare providers from diverse settings (hospitals, clinics, community health), and representatives from relevant health-focused professional associations. This includes representatives from other African countries.
- **Climate Change and Environmental Experts:** Researchers and academic authorities specializing in climate change, environmental health, and allied fields. Additionally, representatives from government ministries and agencies responsible for climate change and environmental matters, along with civil society organizations (CSOs) actively engaged in climate change mitigation and environmental sustainability efforts.
- **Development Partners and Financial Stakeholders:** Representatives from international organizations (WHO, UNFCCC, UNEP) alongside development agencies, donor institutions, and philanthropic organizations supporting health and climate action initiatives in Africa. The conference will also welcome participation from private sector entities committed to aligning with health and climate change goals.
- **Cross-sectoral researchers, Policymakers, and Stakeholders:** Recognizing the interconnectedness of climate and health action, the conference extends its invitation to researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders beyond the immediate health sector. This includes representatives from ministries of finance, infrastructure, and agriculture, along with urban planners, local government officials, and faith-based organizations with a strong community outreach focus.

- **Media Representatives:** Journalists and media professionals from various platforms (print, broadcast, online) covering health, climate change, and development issues will play a vital role in disseminating conference outcomes and raising public awareness.

This targeted audience fosters a comprehensive and collaborative environment. By convening researchers, policymakers, healthcare professionals, scientific experts, development partners, and the media, the conference aims to cultivate knowledge exchange, catalyze cross-sectoral collaboration, and generate impactful results that strengthen health systems and ensure public health in a changing Kenya and Africa's climate.