

# African approaches towards combatting infectious diseases in a changing climatic environment

8 Nov. 2024, online / 10:00-13:00 CET

## Background

Africa stands as the most susceptible continent to the ramifications of climate change. Developing countries' thoughts on climate change and malaria are critical for many reasons. Firstly, many African Countries are inherently vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to factors such as rainfall variation, increase in temperature, limited resources for anticipation and recovery, and low adaptation capacity. Climate change has the potential to exacerbate existing health risks, including malaria, diarrhea, and yellow fever. Malaria -in particular- presents one of the most serious public health challenges in sub-Saharan Africa, with consistently high death tolls of affected individuals, a large share of malaria infections incurring during pregnancy (approx. 12.7 million women (36%)), emerging Pyrethroid Resistance, and resistance to antimalarial drugs in malaria vectors further compounding the challenges faced in Africa.

To effectively manage resistance against infectious diseases, countries can develop and implement national plans for monitoring and managing insecticide resistance in malaria vectors, drawing upon the framework provided by the World Health Organization (WHO). A comprehensive understanding of these unique health impacts can enable the development of more targeted and effective interventions. However, limited economic resources in developing countries often impede their ability to respond to and recover from climate-induced or accelerated health crises. Insight into these economic constraints is crucial for the efficient allocation of international aid and support. Additionally, the socio-cultural contexts of developing countries significantly influence the effectiveness of health and climate change policies. A comprehensive understanding of these dimensions is essential for designing adaptive interventions that are culturally aligned and gender-sensitive, thereby enhancing their potential for success.

## **Aim of the event**

There is a recognized need for a scientific event that facilitates discussions on the perspectives of developing countries concerning climate change and infectious diseases. In light of this, the Interdisciplinary Expert Centre on Climate Change and Health (IECCCH), affiliated with the Research and Transfer Centre “Sustainable Development and Climate Change Management (FTZ-NK) at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, is organizing an online expert seminar titled "African approaches towards combatting infectious diseases under a changing climatic environment" under the leadership of Hamburg University of Applied Science, Germany, this November.

The primary objective of this online event is to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of the interconnections between climate change and infectious diseases. This encompasses exploring how escalating temperatures, extreme weather events, and flooding can impact prevalence levels. Additionally, the seminar aims to facilitate discussions and presentations on the identification and management of disease risks associated with progressing climate change, as well as strategies for effective communication and advocacy on these pertinent issues.

Moreover, this event seeks to foster increased collaboration among higher education institutions, healthcare professionals, businesses, policymakers, and environmental organizations. By bringing together these diverse stakeholders, we aim to encourage collective efforts in addressing the challenges posed by climate change and infectious diseases.

## **Format**

The event will be held online and will be structured around the following elements:

1. Featured Keynotes and dedicated presentations
2. Breakout sessions addressing specific climate and health related issues

## **Topics**

The topics entails, but is not limited to the following themes:

- Climate Change and its role in the transmission of infectious diseases in Africa.
- Climate Change and the role of urbanization on infectious disease transmission in Africa.

- Climate change impacts and role of public health policies and strategies in addressing infectious diseases in Africa.
- Climate Change, community engagement and role of education for disease prevention in Africa.
- Climate change and technology-driven disease surveillance, early warning and response systems in Africa.
- Climate Change and prevalence of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) in Africa.

### **Audience**

The event aims to ensure a diverse array of speakers who represent various countries of Africa, genders, and ethnic backgrounds. It will be of particular relevance to healthcare professionals, policymakers, environmental activists, researchers, and the general public in Africa. This seminar will serve as a pivotal platform where different stakeholders, including policymakers, industry leaders, activists, and academics, can engage in substantive discussions and establish collaborations that propel the climate change and infectious diseases agenda. The event will specifically concentrate on African countries, aiming to support the implementation of distinct action plans and strategies developed to mitigate further transmission of infectious diseases.

### **Publishing opportunity**

As an outcome and for long-term documentation of the event, a collection of exceptional presentations may be invited to contribute to a high-impact scientific publication titled "Climate Change and infectious diseases in Africa".

### **How to participate**

Send your “Expressions of Interest” to attend the event, initially consisting of an abstract (max 200 words) outlining your scientific presentation title via this dedicated online form: <https://forms.office.com/e/q7huMAnSvh>

## **Deadlines**

- Abstracts: The deadline for expressions of interest including the submission of a thematically relevant abstract is **5 September 2024**.
- After expert peer review, accepted Presenters will be informed **by 19 September 2024**.
- Authors of exceptional presentations will be contacted after the event and further details concerning the publication will then be discussed in detail.

**Fees:** The event is free of charge; however, we expect the accepted contributions will indeed be presented.

## **Contact details:**

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