

Background

Diagnostics are a key driver to achieve universal health coverage goals and deliver a clear return on investment towards health and economic outcomes. There is a need to bring together critical and influential stakeholders across Africa to create consensus on strengthening diagnostics capacity.

One key policy guidance in strengthening diagnostics capacity is the WHA Resolution of 2023^[1], whose key recommendations can be described as follows: ⁽¹⁾ Establishment of national diagnostics strategies; ⁽²⁾ Health technology assessment systems; ⁽³⁾ National essential diagnostics lists; ⁽⁴⁾ Extending the scope of packages of essential diagnostic services; ⁽⁵⁾ Developing skilled workforce to manage diagnostic technologies at all levels of the health system; ⁽⁶⁾ Safe use of diagnostic imaging procedures; ⁽⁷⁾ Investing in research and product development; ⁽⁸⁾ Including provisions that facilitate access in funding agreements for research and development in diagnostics; ⁽⁹⁾ Tech transfer policies; ⁽¹⁰⁾ Leveraging and respecting the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement); ⁽¹¹⁾ Entrenching in policy the prevention of anti-competitive practices that hinder access to diagnostics; ⁽¹²⁾ Leveraging international and/or regional collaboration for harmonizing and promoting twinning practices and reliance mechanisms; ⁽¹³⁾ Establishing routine data collection systems for monitoring the effective use of diagnostics; ⁽¹⁴⁾ Investing in diagnostic services, including the selection and use of essential in vitro diagnostics; and ⁽¹⁵⁾ Strengthening international collaboration and assistance for health security

To achieve the above policy imperatives, country ownership and innovative approaches are required. Country ownership is essential for increasing health financing in the context of donor funding shifts^[2]. Innovative approaches such as the use of artificial intelligence, machine learning, connected diagnostics, point-of-care and self-care diagnostics, and process and social innovation can accelerate attainment of diagnostic targets towards for universal health coverage^{[3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8]}.

About the Session

The session shall bring together public and private sector experts to put forward strategies for strengthening diagnostics capacity and advancing access to diagnostic services for universal health coverage in Africa.

Expected Outcomes

1. Discuss, develop and put forward strategies that can be integrated into policies and frameworks for strengthening diagnostic capacity in Africa.
2. Showcase cutting edge diagnostic solutions and discuss the integration and scalability of these innovative solutions in resource limited settings.
3. Identification of funding gaps and innovative financing mechanisms to strengthen diagnostics capacity.
4. Formation of action-oriented partnerships to address common challenges, share resources and align policies that will strengthen diagnostics capacity across Africa.

References

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