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EAST AFRICAN HEALTH RESEARCH COMMISSION



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CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE EAST AFRICAN HEALTH AND SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE & INTERNATIONAL HEALTH EXHIBITION AND TRADE FAIR

1. BACKGROUND

The 12th Ordinary Session of the EAC Council of Ministers (2006) approved the annual East African Health and Scientific Conference & International Health Exhibition and Trade Fair (EAHSC) to be convened in East Africa and hosted on a rotational basis by the EAC Partner States through their respective National Ministries responsible for EAC Affairs, Ministries responsible for Health, and other relevant organisations, and in close collaboration with regional and international health-related NGOs, civil society organisations, individuals, and stakeholders.

The EAHSC contributes towards strengthening regional cooperation in health in line with Article 118 of the Treaty for the establishment of EAC as well as other relevant provisions of the EAC Common Market Protocol. It enhances the ideals of the EAC, which is free movement of People, Services, and Goods. .

Since 2007, six EAHSC have been organized as follows:

#	Dates	Country/City
1	28 th -30 th March 2007	Uganda/Kampala
2	26 th -28 th March 2008	Tanzania/Arusha
3	25 th -27 th March 2009	Kenya/Nairobi
4	27 th -29 th March 2013	Rwanda/Kigali
5	25 th -27 th March 2015	Uganda/Kampala
6	29 th -31 st March 2017	Burundi/Bujumbura

Based on the Protocol establishing the East African Health Research Commission (EAHRC), the Commission is tasked with the responsibility of coordinating the East African Health and Scientific Conference & International Health Exhibition and Trade Fair. The EAHRC was operationalised since 2015. EAHRC coordinated the 6th EAHSC.

The 3rd meeting of EAHRC Commissioners held in KEMRI on 2nd- 3rd March, 2017 recommended to the EAHRC to undertake a comprehensive review of the EAHSC, including the its name, develop a concept note which will guide the organisation and coordination of the conference, and thus prepare a background paper that will be presented for consideration.

2. ORGANISATION OF THE EAHSC

i. Financing

The EAHSC is jointly organised and financed by EAC and the host country. The EAHRC Secretariat and the host country have the responsibility to mobilise resources for the conference. Other EAC Partner States as well have the responsibility to mobilise resources and participants for the conference.

ii. Target of the conference

The EAHSC brings together stakeholders of the health sector from EAC (EAC Secretariat, East African Legislative Assembly, East African Court of Justice, members of the EAC council of ministers, members of the summit, and EAC institutions), EAC Partner States that include ministers of health, finance, higher education, science and technology, members of parliament from national assemblies, government officials, researchers, scientists, practitioners, civil society, media, donors and development partners and the public at large.

iii. Conference periodicity and length

The conference takes place every year during the last three days of March. The dates of the conference are approved by the EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health.

iv. Identification of the main theme, subthemes and symposia

The themes of the annual EAHSC are developed with the goal to improve health care delivery and outcomes. The main theme, subthemes, symposia, and other associated activities of the conference are proposed by EAHRC and approved by the EAC Sectoral Council on Health.

v. Conference publicity

Activities around the EAHSC publicity are carried out by the EAHRC, the host country and others. Currently the website for the conference is opened few months before the conference. Press conferences are organised at regional and host country level before the conference.

vi. Call for abstracts

Advertisement for call of abstracts, which comprises of the main theme of the EAHSC, sub-themes, symposia, exhibition, and trade fair is done several months prior to the conference.

vii. Review of conference abstracts

The abstracts submitted for the EAHSC are reviewed by the EAHRC secretariat and presented to the EAHSC regional steering committee for approval.

viii. Chair of the conference

The chair of the conference is the chair of the national steering committee of the host country.

ix. Key note Speaker

The key note speaker for the main theme of the conference comes from one of the EAC Partner States on a rotational basis (and should not be from the hosting country). He is appointed by the Ministry of Health of the respective country.

x. Conference Program

The program of the conference is developed by the scientific subcommittee of the host country and submitted to the EAHRC secretariat for review and eventual submission to the EAHSC regional steering committee for approval.

xi. Steering committees

In accordance with the decisions of the 5th ordinary Meeting of the EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health held in Arusha, Tanzania on 21st January 2011, there are two EAHSC committees: (i) EAHSC regional Steering Committee, and (ii) National Steering Committees. The host national also has various sub-committees.

The members who constitute the various committees come from the relevant government organs, ministries, and institutions.

xii. Regional steering committee

Each of the EAC Partner States nominates three (3) members for the EAHSC Regional Steering Committee. The regional steering committee members are drawn from various government bodies, research, academic institutions, development partners, regional, intergovernmental organisations, and international organisations. Terms of reference have been developed.

The main function of the Regional Steering Committee is oversight of the organisation of the conference.

xiii. National steering committee

Each EAC Partner States forms a national steering committee. The host national forms a national steering committee that comprise of 15 members.

The national steering committee members are drawn from various government, research and academic institutions, development partners and ministries responsible for health, and EAC affairs. The national steering committees shall form a number of sub-committees depending on the agenda and the scope of the conference.

xiv. Registrations

The registration to the conference is done through the website of the conference or directly on arrival at the conference.

xv. Pre conference meetings

The EAHSC has preconference meetings which are: meetings of the EAC Partner States' National Health Professional Boards, Councils, Associations, Societies and Federations. The Sectoral Council of Health (all sessions: Senior Officials, Coordination Committee and Ministers) take place the same week prior to the conference. The EAC Health ministers and Parliamentarians' forum on health also take place prior to the EAHRC.

xvi. Conference proceedings

a. Book of abstracts of the conference

Abstracts accepted for the conference are compiled in a book of abstracts that is made available during the conference.

b. Conference activities

The conference activities are organised in subthemes. After the opening ceremony, the conference continue in plenary or in breakaway sessions.

c. Symposia

Symposia are taking place simultaneously with the subthemes of the conference.

d. International health exhibition and trade fair

The international health exhibition and trade fair are combined in one activity.

e. Reporting

A report on the conference proceedings is prepared and presented during the last day of the conference.

3. REVIEWED CONCEPT OF THE EAHSC

The EAHRC has developed the concept note of the conference, which will guide the organisation and consistency of the conference. It has collated, reviewed, and organised the available information from different sources to guide the development of the concept. EAHRC after discussion with various stakeholders has restructure some and introduced new aspects of the

conference to allow it to match with the current needs and the role that EAHRC can play in the health sector.

xvii. Name of the conference

The name of the conference “East African Health and Scientific Conference & International Health Exhibition and Trade Fair” is rather long. In accordance with the recommendation of the 3rd EAHRC Commissioners meeting to review the name of the conference, the EAHRC Secretariat proposes the name to be shortened as follows: **“East African Health and Scientific Conference” and the official acronym will be “EAHSC”**

xviii. Periodicity

In order to allow for adequate time to generate tangible scientific material for the conference, to allow for sufficient time for preparation of the subsequent conference, mobilization of resources, and for implementation and reporting of the progress of the post conference activities, the conference will be held **biennially**. Post conference activities will be conducted in parallel with preparatory activities of the next conference.

The EAHSC will be scheduled around the same time biennially; currently is during the last week of March.

xix. Identification of the main theme, subthemes and symposia

The EAHRC Secretariat will develop a concept note of each EAHSC which includes the title of the main theme, sub-themes, symposia and other preconference, conference and post conference activities. This concept note will be communicated to the EAC Partner States and other stakeholders for inputs through the appropriate EAC channels.

xx. Conference information and publicity

The EAHSC information (including all information of the previous conferences will be available in the web portal for health information in East Africa. The portal will be the main outlet for the publicity of the EAHSC.

The EAHRC Secretariat and the NFPs will be responsible for regularly updating the information. The portal will be linked to other web sites (e.g. EAC, web sites of the EAC Partner States). The websites of the EAHRC National Focal Points will also have a space for the activities of the EAHRC, including the EAHSC.

The EAHRC Secretariat, the host nation, and the NFPs will be responsible for publicity of the forthcoming EAHSC.

xxi. Chair of the conference

The Chair of the conference will be the chair of the scientific subcommittee of the host country. The Executive Secretary will be the Co-chair of the conference.

xxii. Coordination of the conference

At regional level, the Coordinator of the conference will be the Executive Secretary of the EAHRC.

At host country level, the Coordinator of the conference is the Chair of the National Steering Committee. In all other partner states, the Coordinator is the head of the EAHRC-NFP, assisted by the NFP Coordinator.

xxiii. National steering committee

In order to improve preparations of the conference, the national steering committee of the host nation will have subcommittees. The following are key sub-committees that should be constituted for the conference:

- a. Resource mobilization, administration and finance
- b. Procurement and logistic sub-committee
- c. Protocol and security
- d. International health exhibition and trade fair
- e. Communication (media, advertisement etc.), IT and audio visual
- f. Welfare and social events sub-committee.

More sub-committees may be formed based on the need.

The chair of the national steering committee of the host country will be the Minister of Health and the head of the NFP will be the Secretary.

The national steering committees in EAC partner states other than the host nation will be comprised of members with expertise in all aspects of the conference. The chair of the national steering committee in partner states other than the host nation will be the head of the NFP.

xxiv. Event planning

Besides the steering committees there will be an event planner/firm with experience in organising such events which will involve in the organisation and coordination of the conference. ToRs will be developed depending on the needs.

xxv. Preconference meetings

The EAHSC will be preceded by the following preconference meetings:

a. Meetings of National Health Professional Boards, Councils, Associations, Societies and Federations

The boards and councils are: EAC national medical and dental practitioners boards/councils, EAC national nursing and midwifery councils,

EAC medical laboratory boards and councils, EAC national physiotherapists and occupational therapy boards and councils, EAC national pharmacy boards and councils, EAC national radiographers boards and councils, EAC national environmental health practitioners boards and councils, and EAC national clinical officers and medical assistants boards and councils.

b. Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health

The Sectoral Council of ministers of Health is preceded by the meeting of the Senior Officials and the Permanent/Principal Secretaries.

c. East African Government Leaders, Legislators, and Legal Executives' Health Forum" (EAGLES'HEALTH FORUM)

The EAC Health Ministers and Parliamentarians' Forum on Health is renamed "East African Government Leaders, Legislators, and Legal Executives' Health Forum" (EAGLES'HEALTH FORUM). The session will bring together East African Government Leaders, Legislators, and Legal Executives in a forum that will be organised in the afternoon/evening a day before the conference. The aim of this forum will be to provide an executive summary of the theme, subthemes, and symposia of the conference. In this way it will provide the the overall objective of the main theme of the conference and its role to the EAC health and prosperity. Furthermore, EAHRC secretariat and commissioners will present on the progress made by the commission on various aspects, and share views on critical issues pertaining to health in the region and the world in general. Participants and experts to facilitate the forum will be identified based on the theme of the conference, this may include participants from CSO, NGOs, etc.

d. Young East African Health Research Scientists Forum.(YEARS' FORUM)

EAHRC introduces the 'Young East African Health Research Scientists' Forum (YEARS' FORUM)'. The YEARS' Forum will take place three days prior to the conference; it will be composed by 6 outstanding PhD candidates in health sciences from each of the EAC Partner States. The candidates will be sponsored and the EAHRC will define the criteria of selection of the candidates and sponsorship modalities. During the three days, they will present and share their work, will be trained on key areas of research (research as a as a career), and will receive mentorship during the sessions and identify mentors who will continue with their mentorship even after the conference. They will attend presentations from seniors who may serve as their role model for their career and they will participate in social/cultural events as part of EAC integration and establishing collaborations among themselves. They will form one of the professional groups that will be communicating through the Web portal for health

information in EA and Web portal social media. EAHRC will develop a Career Development Plan for the group and supervise their mentorship.

xxvi. Program of the conference

The program of the conference will be developed by the EAHRC Scientific Team in collaboration with the Scientific Subcommittee of the host country. It will be submitted to the regional steering committee.

xxvii. Key note Speakers

The Key note speaker for the main theme of the conference will continue to come from one EAC partner state on a rotational basis (and not from the host country). He/she will introduce the conference during the opening ceremony. On the other hand, other key note speakers will be identified for the subthemes of the conference and will introduce the sessions on subthemes during the plenary sessions.

xxviii. Instructions and guidelines

Instructions and guidelines for abstract submission, abstract reviews, and to presenters, session chairs, key note speakers, symposia organizers, exhibitors, and Trade Fair presenters will be updated for each EAHSC. They will be posted on the website of the conference.

xxix. Symposia

Symposia will take place during the last day of the Conference. Symposia will be linked to the main theme of the conference and will be sessions of coordinated presentations and discussions by experts on a specific topic in order to outline recommendations that will be further analysed and synthesized into actionable plans by the EAHRC secretariat in collaboration with other stakeholders. Each symposium will commence with a main presentation by a leading expert in the field, followed by discussions and subsequently outlining concrete recommendations.

xxx. Abstracts of the conference

Abstracts submitted and accepted for the conference will be published as a supplementary issue of the East African Health Research Journal (EAHRJ).

xxxi. Book of Abstracts

A compilation of abstracts from East African literature related to the main theme of the conference will be done and published for distribution during the conference to complement the discussions of experts during the symposia

xxxii. International health exhibition

Alongside the conference, there will be an international health exhibition. Research institutions, health care facilities, medical /health academic institutions, medical and pharm industries, NGOs, CSOs, Ministries, EAC Secretariat, International organizations, UN agencies (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, etc.) will showcase their activities and products.

This will allow participants to showcase products from research, academia, healthcare services and the health sector in general.

xxxiii. International health trade fair

Given the free movement of goods, the trade fair will allow trade related to health from East Africa to fair during the scientific conference. The Trade fair will invite all health related business in the region.

xxxiv. Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

The EAHSC will offer professional development or continuing education credits for presenters, discussants and participants of the conference.

All participants will be given certificates of attendance.

xxxv. Evaluation of the conference

Each session of the conference and the conference in general will be evaluated using an official EAHRC evaluation forms. The participants will evaluate the sessions, the chair, co-chair and rapporteurs will evaluate the presenters. The overall conference will be evaluated by the participants at the end of the conference.

A representative sample of participants will be used to evaluate the sessions and the conference in general.

The chair of each session will be responsible for making sure that there is time at the end of the session for participants to fill out the evaluation forms, and for collecting them and depositing them at the coordination desk of the conference.

xxxvi. Recommendations and post conference meetings

The EAHSC will generate general recommendations that will further be synthesized by the EAHRC Secretariat to form concrete, strategic and implementable action plans. This will be done through organized post conference meetings to put into context the outlined recommendations.

xxxvii. Awards

Awards on various categories will be prepared, a committee will be formed to nominate winners such as: Best presenters, best exhibitors, etc. The awards will be given during the closing ceremony of the conference.

xxxviii. Reporting

There will be a succinct report of the conference proceedings which will be done by the scientific subcommittee of the host country and a comprehensive report by the EAHRC Secretariat. The report will be presented to the Sectoral Council on Health through the EAHRC Commissioners.

xxxix. Archiving

Material of the conference (speeches, presentations, reports, statistics, photos, etc.), including of the previous conferences will be made available through the Web portal for health information for East Africa.

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