

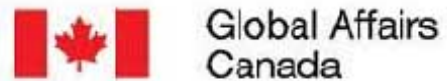


Lagos State Ministry of Health



**Lagos Declaration and Call to Action on  
Science Communication and the Public Learning  
and Understanding of Science (PLUS) in Africa**  
***27-29 July 2016, Lagos, Nigeria***

**Themes:** Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID); Bio-security and Bio-threat Reduction;  
Science Communication and the Public Learning and Understanding of Science (PLUS);  
Vaccine Development Strategy for Africa



**Mothergold**



**We**, African scientists, medical practitioners, science communicators', science journalists', health researchers, experts in Bio-safety, Bio-security and Bio-ethics, leaders, decision-makers, civil society activists, Representatives of Health Ministries in the ECOWAS Region, Representatives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD Agency), Representatives of the African Union Commission, UN Agencies and other bilateral and Multi-lateral international development partners, meeting at the 2nd African Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID) & Bio-security 2016, held from 27-29 July 2016 in Lagos, Nigeria.

**Recognising**, the unique developments at this second Conference, following on from the first, in 2015 (Dakar, Senegal), in the strengthening and expansion of the platform, debate and knowledge development, to address the pertinent critical relevance of Science Communication and the Public Learning and Understanding of Science (PLUS) as crucial to the prevention, mitigation, and containment of Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID) in Africa, in line with global recognitions and developments.

**Noting**, with concern that, despite progressive developments in the global north and many parts of the global south, science communication and PLUS in Africa, continues to lag-behind, in spite of the international recognition of the fundamental role that it plays in the prevention, mitigation and containment of Emerging Infectious Diseases, good health, and the wellbeing of citizens.

**Acknowledging**, the progress made in the adoption of the African Union's ten-year **Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024)**, by African Heads of State in 2014, and the adoption of its Implementation Plan, with the **Priority 3 - Theme on Communication (Physical & Intellectual Mobility)**.

**Recognising**, the transformative vision of the African Union's Agenda 2063 for Africa's development, '*The Africa we want*', and the imperatives of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) for the global development agenda, and affirm that science communication and PLUS are key parameters for the pro-active delivery of these laudable development paradigms in Africa.

**Further Recognising**, the urgent need for the popularization of science and technology in Africa, so that citizens can learn and understand science, thereby making informed choices that will improve their health, resilience in the face of EID's, well-being and quality of life; the need for African scientists, researchers and academics to learn to communicate to their unscientific audiences and publics in a language they understand, in order for scientific knowledge to be shared, particularly in rural areas; the need for communication between researchers and policy-makers and to build the interface between researchers and the users of scientific results and technology; Knowledge is power, and in order to appreciate and benefit from scientific achievements, Africans need to learn science and to popularize scientific knowledge.

**We**, therefore elaborate a **Call to Action** as follows:

1. African Member states, Regional Economic Communities' (RECs), African Union Commission (AUC), New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD Agency) and the relevant partners, to strengthen the **STISA 2024 Priority 3 on Communication (Physical & Intellectual Mobility)**, so that it comprehensively addresses the critical relevance of science communication and PLUS in Africa's STI framework, in line with international developments in this strategic area.
2. RECs, the relevant partners and African national governments to domesticate the STISA 2024 within the overall people-centred African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 in their national STI policy frameworks, and advance the development of inclusive policies, programmes and capacity-building initiatives on the popularization of science and technology, science communication and PLUS.
3. AUC and NEPAD to put in place a cluster on science communication to support the implementation of STISA 2024, particularly, **Priority 3**, through the popularization of science and technology, science communication and PLUS.
4. African national governments and Ministries of Education to:
  - (a) Advance, progress and implement good practice initiatives to develop enhanced Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education at all levels, on the African continent, particularly for girls and women, as a foundational strength for the Public Learning and Understanding of Science by citizens.
  - (b) Promote the development of science centres, science museums, and libraries (such as the Library of Alexandria, in Egypt) within an empowering and affirming Africa-centred institutional and knowledge framework, as a strategic mechanism with which to enhance the popularization of science and technology, science communication and PLUS on the continent, in line with international good practice. This is in line with **UNESCO** having designated the **World Science Day for Peace and Development** on November 10, 2016, as the **International Science Centre and Science Museum Day (ISCSMD)**, to highlight the contribution of science centres and science museums to the delivery of the SDG's globally.
5. Regional Economic Communities (REC's) to provide leadership, support and capacity-building to member states in their regions for the advancement of science communication and PLUS, in policies, programmes and development frameworks.

6. African scientific societies, academies, institutions and expert associations to provide:
  - (a) Leadership, support and drive for the advancement of science communication and PLUS on the continent, at all levels of operation, to address the need to close the major knowledge gaps that impact profoundly on the scientific literacy, learning and understanding of science of African citizens, making them vulnerable to opportunistic infections especially new emerging infectious diseases and general poor health.
  - (b) Training, support and partnership networking programmes with African mass media organisations, in newsprint, television, radio, online, social media, etc., to enhance the capacity-building and knowledge-base of science journalists and generic journalists, in their delivery of science-based and science-related news, articles, stories and communications, so as to make them more effective partners in the delivery of the popularization of science and technology, science communication and PLUS on the continent.
7. International development partners, bilateral and multilateral international partners to support African governments and African scientific institutions in the advancement of Science Communication and PLUS on the African continent, for the betterment of the education, health, and well-being of citizens.