



# Conference REPORT

**NOVEMBER 25-27, 2020**



**Theme: Strengthening Africa's Resilience in Tackling Emerging Biosecurity Threats: Lessons from Covid-19 pandemic**

**Venue: Civic Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria**

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*Executive Governor of Lagos State- His Excellency, Babajide Olusola Sanwoolu, surrounded by delegates from International Embassies in Nigeria, Hon. Commissioner for health in Lagos State, Prof. Akin Abayomi, and other conference participants*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **6<sup>th</sup> African Conference on One Health & Biosecurity** was held from the 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> November 2020, at the Civic Centre, Victoria Island Lagos, Nigeria.

This forum brought together participants from around the globe, including policy makers, biomedical scientists, public health stakeholders, members from the public and private health sector, and a variety of academics to discuss Africa's resilience in tackling emerging Biosecurity threats in the light of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The forum was organized by the Global Emerging Pathogens Treatment Consortium (GET) in partnership with the Lagos State Ministry of Health.

The three-day meeting was sponsored by Zendale Consulting, Carter Biggs, Inqaba Biotech and Peter & Jane Limited. Apart from various state governments and organisations in Nigeria, attendees came from member African countries with delegates representing international organizations including the West African Health Organisation (WAHO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Economic Forum (WEF), African Development Bank (AfDB), Institute of Social and Economic Research and Policy (ISERP), and Global Biological Policy and Programs (GBPP).

The meeting served as the follow up to the 5<sup>th</sup> edition held in Abuja, Nigeria. The theme of the conference was **'Climate Change and Conflict: Implications for Emerging Infectious Diseases and Biosecurity in Africa.'** The conference focused on the strong links between climate change and emerging infectious diseases. The conference iterated the need for the region to adopt the One Health approach in addressing emerging health challenges in the region.



*Prof. Akin Abayomi (Hon. Commissioner for Health in Lagos State) welcoming his fellow Commissioner, Dr. Obi Emmanuel, Commissioner for Health in Enugu State, to the conference*

## Objectives

The objective of the 6<sup>th</sup> conference was providing an opportunity to present the latest breaking research activity and collaborations from COVID-19 and other deadly Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID). The conference also set forth to identify effective ongoing COVID-19 response strategies and using information shared to develop effective response strategies for the region.

While debating evolving vaccine and immunological therapeutic modalities, the conference sought to identify regional and international opportunities for collaboration on EID and Biosecurity research. The conference also set out to discuss and debate the impact of changing climate on EID and Biosecurity in Africa.

To achieve this objective, the forum adopted the following approach:

- Plenary with keynote addresses on the major themes of the forum;
- Three panel discussions on addressing biosecurity threats, role of CSOs, and Africa's hope on COVID-19 vaccine production;
- Plenary on paper presentations, and abstract presentations;
- Policy makers and researchers interactive session that features remarks on sub-topics, and a closing remark by The Governor of Lagos State; and
- Messages from sponsors, conference takeaway, announcement of location of next conference.

The discussions focused on the **following themes**:

- Biosecurity
- One Health approach
- Containing the COVID-19 Pandemic in Africa
- Identifying treatment options
- Exploring COVID-19 Vaccine strategies
- Empowering indigenous response mechanisms
- Mobilising a concerted post COVID-19 plan





- Conference participants seated at the conference hall



- From Left to right: Dr. Obi Emmanuel (Hon. Commissioner for Health in Enugu State), Dr. Olusegun Ogboye (Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Ministry of Health), Prof. Akin Abayomi (Hon. Commissioner for Health in Lagos State) and Dr. Innocent Vakkai (Hon. Commissioner for Health, Taraba State)

## **Main Recommendations from the 6<sup>th</sup> African Conference on One Health & Biosecurity:**

- Nigeria should set up a committee on development of vaccine to combat Covid-19 in the country.
- Countries within the West Africa region should work together to fight the pandemic and other emerging diseases while also document experiences, share and arrive on knowledge-based decisions.
- Sub-national and local governments must be prepared in terms of data gathering, funding, and communication.
- Governments should design recovery policies to effectively co-deliver triple bottom line benefits of economic, climate, and social outcomes.
- Countries should build healthier, more livable and more productive cities, which would also reduce Green House Gas emissions.
- Proper management of municipal waste is importance to the extent that, the better we manage our waste, the less disposed we are to biosecurity issues or threats. Waste management is considered to be one of the most serious environmental problems confronting developing countries, and this should be addressed to wade of rodents and other animals.
- Civil Society organisations (CSO) should continue with oversight function and hold government to account and that CSO should establish a network on biosecurity.
- Participants noted that biosecurity is everybody's business, therefore, citizens should be aware of their roles in biosecurity and government should create a bio secured environment.
- There should be effective leadership in addressing infectious diseases and pathogens of high consequences.
- Proper legislation both at the regional and national levels should be in place in managing the pandemic and other health emergencies.
- Participants stressed the need for public-private-partnership in managing emergencies.
- Africa should not just be a perceive consumer of vaccine but be part of the process.
- Policy makers to invest in preparedness and surveillance at all levels down to the local government. No disease will remain eradicated or contain until members of the state participate in global practices.

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

Africa CDC	Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
AfDB	African Development Bank
AU	African Union
BSL-3	Biosafety Level-3
CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
COO	Chief Operating Officer
CSOs	Civil Society Organisation
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CSACEFA	Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All
DMPPT2	Decision Makers' Program Planning Toolkit, Version 2
EIDs	Emerging Infectious Diseases
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GBD	Global Biosecurity Dialogue
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GET	Global Emerging Pathogens Treatment Consortium
ICCDI	International Climate Change Development Initiatives
IDSR-3	Third edition of the Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response
IPC	Infection Prevention and Control
LASUBEB	Lagos State Universal Basic Education Board
LGAs	Local Government Areas
LSBTS	Lagos State Blood Transfusion Services
LSBTC	Lagos State Blood Transfusion Committee
MRFs	Material Recovery Facilities
MSW	Municipal Solid Waste
NCDC	Nigeria Centre for Disease Control
PDP	Peace and Development Project
POEs	Points of Entry
POCT	Point-of-care Testing
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
R&D	Research and Development
SARS-COV2	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
TLSs	Transfer Loading Stations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
VMMC	Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WEF	World Economic Forum
WAHO	West African Health Organisation
WRAHP	Women's Rights and Health Project
WHO	World Health Organization



*Conference Backdrop and Stage*



## **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

### **Context and Rationale**

The COVID-19 pandemic was confirmed to have spread to Africa on 14 February 2020, with the first confirmed case announced in Egypt. The first confirmed case in sub-Saharan Africa was announced in Nigeria at the end of February. Within three months, the virus had spread throughout the continent, as Lesotho, the last African sovereign state to have remained free of the virus, reported a case on 13 May. By 26 May, it appeared that most African countries were experiencing community transmission, although testing capacity was limited. Most of the identified imported cases arrived from Europe and the United States rather than from China where the virus originated.

Experts have worried about COVID-19 spreading to Africa, because many of the healthcare systems on the continent are inadequate, having problems such as lack of equipment, lack of funding, insufficient training of healthcare workers, and inefficient data transmission. Observers believe that the impact of the disease has been huge.

The economies of many countries had taken a bad hit, the capacity of hospitals in many countries had been stretched, and human communication and contacts were re-shaped in ways never witnessed before. COVID-19 infection has not abated in many parts of the world. It is important that stakeholders at all levels take action to break the transmission, reduce the impacts of the outbreak and support control measures.

### **Key Objectives**

The key objectives of the conference was based on the premise that Africa should host its own indigenous academic and policy meetings to address response mechanism to biological threats caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from focusing on discussion on the various efforts at containing the pandemic in Africa, the conference also set out to identify and discuss treatment options, galvanize scientists, policy makers and African community at large to mobilize a concerted post COVID-19 plan.

To accomplish this objective, the forum highlighted the following four key themes:

1. The Rising COVID-19 Pandemic and Efforts to Contain it
2. One Health and Biosecurity
3. COVID-19 Vaccine Development
4. Highlighting Africa's Resilience in Tackling Threats
5. Explore Opportunities for Collaboration

These five themes underscored every element of the conference, both through specialized discussion of them independently, and how they become interwoven into a targeted approach to build resilience and capacity across the region.

This main objective can be further elucidated into the following elements:

- Opportunity to present the latest breaking research activity and collaborations from COVID-19 and other deadly Emerging Infectious Diseases;
- Identifying effective ongoing COVID-19 response strategies and use information shared to develop effective response strategies for the region;
- Debate evolving vaccine and immunological therapeutic modalities;
- Identifying regional and international opportunities for collaboration on EID and Biosecurity research; and
- Discussing and debating the impact of changing climate on EID and Biosafety internal and indigenous scientific research, fully intertwined with policymaking, as a key foundation in developing biosecurity in Africa.

## Methodology

The format adopted for the 6<sup>th</sup> African Conference on On Health and Biosecurity consisted of plenary discussions, panel discussion sessions, abstract presentations, and poster viewings, all of which largely pertained to the themes of the forum.

The content of the three-day conference was divided into the following sections:

- 20 Plenary Papers revolving around the themes were presented.
- 3 Panel Discussion Sessions: These sessions explored topics related to galvanizing a regional approach to addressing biosecurity threats in the country, the role played by civil society organisations (CSOs) during health challenges posed by the pandemic, and Africa's role and hope in the production of the COVID-19 vaccine. The purpose of a panel discussion was to spark conversation between the groups of experts and thought leaders, and the **audience** was able to learn from their discourse and interaction.
- Poster View Session: This essentially entailed an interactive session involving policy makers and researchers, who made incisive remarks on chosen issues/topics.
- Abstract Presentations: Numerous resources persons on the final day of the conference presented abstracts from their ventures/research works to enrich the discussion and shed more light on the theme of the conference.

## CONFERENCE OPENING CEREMONY

Wednesday, 25 November 2020

DAY 1 - Opening ceremony

### *Presentation 1: Why are we here?*

**Prof. Akin Abayomi (Lagos State Commissioner for Health)**

The 6<sup>th</sup> African Conference on One Health and Biosecurity commenced with an opening ceremony at the main Conference Hall of Civic Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria. Major highlights from the opening ceremony were the Welcome Address from Prof. Akin Abayomi (the Lagos State Honorable Commissioner for Health), and messages/presentations from Dr. Chike Ihekweazu (the Director, Nigeria CDC), Dr. Innocent Vakkai (Taraba State Commissioner for Health), Dr. Samuel Yeniyi (WHO Nigeria representative), Dr. Oladotun Bobadoye (COO of GET), and Dr. Abdourahmana Sow (Head of Lab. Services in Charge of Epidemic Control and Public Health Lab. At WAHO).

In his words of welcome titled “Why are we here?”, Professor Akin Abayomi explained that Global Emerging Pathogens Treatment Consortium (GET) was established after the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa. He said this was because West Africa was not prepared to manage the outbreak of the disease in terms of infrastructure.

The Commissioner defined Biosecurity as an event caused by pathogens of high consequences which can disrupt economy, health and lead to chaos. According to him, such pathogens have no known treatment such as CoVID-19, which he said took scientists unawares. He said the pathogens come out of the ecosystem which may escape from biological facility.

He described the One Health concept as a WHO paradigm that relates to human health in the environment we live and the food we eat. He said the state of our health is determined by the quality of the environment in which we live.

He listed factors driving bio-insecurity to include climate change, rapid population expansion, environmental degradation, technological advancement and human mobility (he said Covid-19 spreads rapidly because of rapid human mobility).

Prof. Abayomi explained that role of government is to be aware, prepare, predict, respond and restore calm after a biosecurity threat hits a community. He said GET’s function is aimed at creating awareness through high and intermodal advocacy.

He said Lagos used Ebola to prepare, and latter set up a biosecurity road map: human resource training, infrastructure development, analysis of Lagos state legislation. He said the government spent months to strengthen the laws on how to handle biosecurity threats. He said government revitalized the infectious diseases centre in Yaba, recruited personnel and trained them to prepare for subsequent events.

He said after the Covid-19 break out in China, the government sped up the Lagos biosecurity road map, adding that Lagos was 70 per cent ready when the pandemic hit.

He listed the tripod of biosecurity threat to include public health crisis, economic crisis and security crisis. He described public health crisis as sicknesses, death and panic as a scenario of concerns that lead to an economic crisis which can be caused by a lockdown. According to him, both public health crisis and economic crisis can lead to security crisis which entails break down of law and order.

He said biosecurity or insecurity is everybody's business, adding that Nigerians should be aware of their roles in biosecurity and create a bio secured environment for the citizenry.

He thanked Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu for supporting to host the meeting in Lagos.



*Prof. Akin Abayomi, Hon. Commissioner for Health in Lagos State giving a speech*

### **Goodwill message 1:**

- **Dr. Innocent Vakkai (Taraba State Commissioner for Health)**

He sent a goodwill message on behalf of the 36 States Health Commissioners and the FCT administration to the conference. He said that other states learnt from the

experience of Lagos being the epicenter of Covid-19. He expressed hope that the nation would be able to mitigate the event of a second wave of Covid-19.

### *Goodwill message 2:*

- **Dr. Samuel Yeniyi (WHO Nigeria representative)**

He said we should be biosafety ready for any pathogens of high consequences. He said that a conference like this cannot be more appropriate now than before. He said the theme topics are closely related. He said the collaboration in health care is multi-sectoral and very important. He said bio-containment practices are fundamental to public health.

He stressed that public and economic improvements are linked together and any disruption of one affects the other.



*Dr. Alpha Ahmadou Diallo from the Ministry of Health in Guinea, Dr. Ayodotun Bobadoye-GET COO, Hon. Commissioner for health in Lagos State- Prof. Akin Abayomi and GET Executive Secretary-Dr. Babatunde Saka*



## PLENARY PRESENTATIONS & DISCUSSIONS

### PLENARY 1

#### *Presentation 1: Biosecurity Threats: Learning from the past and preparing for the future*

- Dr. Oladotun Bobadoye (COO of GET)

He said biosecurity pathogens can cause a global catastrophe. He said Covid-19 has within one year reached every nook and cranny of the world, showing how a small pathogen in a remote part of the world can spread to most parts of the world.

He explained that biosecurity threats affect plants and animals too, for example, the African swine fever, the Fall Army worm within two years spread to many countries, attacking maize plants. He mentioned other challenges to include environmental degradation and climate change, air pollution, and sea level rise.

He said the only way to tackle biosecurity threat is to create a platform like the GET conference to get people together and proffer solutions to inherent challenges.



*GET COO, Dr. Bobadoye Ayodotun, during his presentation*

## ***Presentation 2: Future of Nigeria's security***

- **Dr. Chikwe Ihekweazu (Director, Nigeria CDC)**

He listed outbreaks from 2014 to the present day to include Ebola, Polio, meningitis, Lassa fever, and Covid-19. He said while responding to Covid-19, they strengthened existing institutions, enhanced surveillance, built molecular diagnostic capacity across the country, improved emergency preparedness and response, and prioritized infectious diseases prevention and control.

## ***Presentation 3: From Ebola to COVID-19: Which biosecurity lessons have we learnt***

- **Dr. Abdourahmana Sow (Head of Lab. Services in Charge of Epidemic Control and Public Health Lab. At WAHO)**

He stressed that, in terms of Surveillance and Contact Tracing, there is need to strengthen capacities at ground crossing PoEs by testing of travelers, isolation, case management, and Risk Communication. Concerning the digitalization of the Covid-19 surveillance and response system, facilitation of data management should be carried out and in-depth analysis conducted.

He underlined the need for Capacity Building in IDSR-3 to strengthen routine surveillance systems, to effectively investigate confirmed cases isolated at home.

He listed challenges related to Risk Communication and Community Engagement to include weak compliance with non-pharmaceutical interventions especially during electoral period; low risk perception; lack of community engagement; rumours and misinformation in the media; denial, misinformation, stigma and discrimination against COVID-19 affected families (The Gambia); and working with increased public frustration with the sustained restrictions imposed.

Dr Sow outlined the way forward thus:

- Enhancing surveillance through wastewater surveillance and in-depth cluster analysis,
- Building capacities for reopening of land and sea borders and cross-border collaboration,
- Supporting Risk Communication and Community engagement training (Journalists, Communication officers, armed forces, community leaders, etc..) at the subnational level,
- Ongoing supporting research for improving Covid-19 response strategies,
- Provision of adequate stocks of diagnostic PPEs to all health facilities in ECOWAS Member States, and
- West African Countries COVID-19 vaccine accessibility

## PANEL DISCUSSION SESSION ONE

**Topic:** Galvanising a regional approach to addressing biosecurity threats in Nigeria

**Moderator:** Dr. Adesina Fagbenro

**Panellists:**

1. Dr Alpha Diallo, Republic of Guinea
2. Dr. Jide Idris, Former Health Commissioner, Lagos State
3. Dr. Obi Emmanuel, Commissioner for Health, Enugu State
4. Dr. Adeyeye, Ondo State
5. Prof. Akin Abayomi, Commissioner for Health, Lagos State
6. Dr. Olu Ode, representative of Ekiti State Ministry of Health.
7. Dr. Tomi Coker, Commissioner for Health, Ogun State.

**Dr. Fagbenro** started by asking the panelists to throw some light on their idea of a regional approach to addressing biosecurity threat.

**Prof. Abayomi** addressed the issue from a global perspective, saying that there are various treaties on biosecurity and One Health. He said the global treaty defines each country as signatory to the management of biosecurity treaty and that by the virtue of being part of the treaty, one needs to be involved.

He emphasized that the key word is domestication of the treaty from the global to country, state and cascaded down to the local level.

However, a country may be aware of the strategy but places biosecurity on its low priority list or due to low resources or other things contending for the limited resources.

**Dr. Fagbenro** asked states how they collaborated during the lockdown to address the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Dr. Ode** said the NCDC has done a lot in enlightening the state such that Ekiti has been responding proactively in addressing Covid-19. For example, the government set up a Covid-19 advisory committee before the outbreak of the pandemic in the state.

People in the state were trained on EOC and were ready before they recorded the first case. He added that they got guardians from NCDC, UNICEF and CBOs.

**Dr. Fagbenro** asked the Anambra State Health Commissioner, Dr Obi, on how they filled capacity gap, and what relationship did the state have with neighbouring states?

**Dr. Obi** said they received guidance from NCDC. Covid-19 was considered a novel disease, and they learnt from experiences of other states. This, he added, helped Anambra to prepare, following the guidelines and protocols being used by Lagos state.

He said Covid-19 created several opportunities to do simulations of how to respond to biosecurity threats.

**Dr. Fagbenro** asked the Commissioner for Health in Ogun State how they managed interstate travels.

**Dr. Coker** responded that they did collaboration, communication, coordination and cash. She said the state collaborated at the national level with NCDC and at sub-national with other state governments. She reiterated that there was personal communication with other Commissioners and herself and that it was a teamwork.

**Coker** explained further that Lagos borders were hotspot and they planned responses around the borders. They also dealt with international borders such as the one they shared with Benin Republic. They had Nigerian citizens arriving at the borders in Ogun State, and they had to move them safely through Ogun State to their destinations in Nigeria.

She added that there was a lot of coordination with Port Health, Immigration, private sector, and development agencies such as UNICEF, WHO, AU, who supported the state emergency operations centre.

**Dr. Fagbenro** asked the Ondo State Health Commissioner on how the state prioritised financing.

**Dr. Adeyeye** responded that Ondo State had a very peculiar situation, adding that, in Ondo state, they shared borders with Edo, Ogun, Osun, Kogi, Ekiti and Lagos states. He said it was very difficult for Ondo State to close her borders during the lockdown because there were so many places to man. And that they had a lot of challenges, they isolated everybody with Covid-19.

He said the state needed to contend with the fact that most of the people would not believe in the pandemic and were not obeying protocols.

**Dr. Adeyeye** also mentioned that apart from Covid-19, they also had serious challenges with Lassa fever with recorded cases in 11 out the 18 LGAs. He disclosed that the state is fighting a war on Lassa fever by eradication of rats.

He said funding has been a challenge, that the current administration inherited backlog of unpaid salaries which it has been trying to offset. He said the state has been receiving support on Lassa fever.

**Dr. Fagbenro** asked Dr. Diallo of Republic Guinea to explain his country's experience during the health emergency.

**Dr. Diallo** explained that when Ebola arrived in Guinea, they spent four months to diagnose the disease. He said they built capacity and they can now do it (diagnosis) in a shorter time. He said that because of the experience with Ebola, when Covid-19 came, it took them a week to diagnose it.

He said that there is a compelling reason for countries to work together, because local and national efforts can be useless without regional efforts. He emphasized the need to document experiences and share them and that decisions should be knowledge-based.

**Dr. Jide Idris**, former Commissioner for Health in Lagos State, said that Nigerians do not learn from experience. He said even though Nigeria is a signatory to a lot of treaties, the country is not acting on them.

He said the country had a lot of experiences with Ebola and disasters it never planned for, such as building collapse, plane crash, and flooding, among others which were physical disasters.

He said from these, they started mapping vulnerabilities in Lagos which informed the decision to build institutions and that when Ebola struck, the state relied on these institutions with assistance of partners.

When Covid-19 struck as a pandemic, he added that the nation's supporters had their own problems and were unable to offer any meaningful assistance.

He said Nigeria failed in certain instances such as in NCDC in preparedness and legal issues, among others. For example, the NCDC was for a long time not backed by law. He added that many states started building capabilities after Covid-19 entered the country.

He warned that Lassa fever, malaria, and HIV, among others, are still killing people, adding that donor agencies came to the aid of Lagos State in tackling Ebola.

He stressed that every state must be prepared in terms of data gathering, funding, communicating with people and share their knowledge. He added that states and local government councils should go back and plan for disaster which would happen.

In conclusion, the moderator, **Dr. Fagbenro**, asked the panelists to mention a final word, one thing that would help them to collaborate better.

**Idris:** Leadership.

**Diallo:** One Health.

**Adeyeye:** Leadership.

**Coker:** Communication.

**Obi:** Legislation.



Ode: Perception and integration.

## PANEL DISCUSSION SESSION TWO

**Topic:** Role of Civil Society Organizations during health emergencies

**Moderator:** Ms Gbemisola Akosa

**Panellists:**

1. James Unegbu (Women's Rights and Health Project - WRAHP).
2. Ronke Eseka (Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All - CSACEFA)
3. Olumide Idowu (International Climate Change Development Initiatives - ICCDI)
4. Francis Abayomi (Peace and Development Project - PDP)

**Akosa** began the session by asking the panelists what they did during the Covid-19 lockdown in Nigeria and the relationship with biosecurity.

**Unegbu** explained that in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and the social lock-down imposed by the Nigerian Government, WRAHP implemented several strategic interventions to sustain the health and rights of women and girls in Lagos.

- Launched the Ireti SGBV Referral and Resource Center contact centre to sustain access to counseling and referral services.
- Conducted a rapid assessment on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the frequency of SGBV cases in Alimosho LGA.
- Produced an advocacy/information leaflet of the findings of the assessment.
- Disseminated the results via social media and email services to community beneficiaries and policy makers in line ministries in Lagos State.
- Disseminated findings via radio, translating the messages into local languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba).

He added that the organization implemented the distribution of relief materials to 156 survivors' households in Alimosho LGA of Lagos and also:

- Conducted strategic advocacy with international donors to share findings and recommendations
- Sampled 400 respondents using survey monkey and email services. A total of 374 samples were validated. Respondents were comprised of 50% male and 50% female, 28% of respondents indicated that they had witnessed a domestic dispute

among their neighbors in the last 30 days while 32% of respondents reported being beaten by their husband (21%) or wife (11%) within the last 30 days.

On the way forward, he suggested:

- Providing swift psycho-social support to cater for women and girls who have survived GBV during the pandemic.
- Strengthening the use of digital tools to report and respond to GBV incidents across Nigeria and provide SRH information/services, especially in emergency situations like the pandemic.
- Working to ensure increased collaboration among justice-related service providers and CSOs in order to create a more effective referral system.
- Increasing the capacity of community members to serve as mandatory reporters of SGBV and domestic violence.
- Advocating for gender-responsive budgeting at all levels of government, especially in emergency contexts.

**Eseka** disclosed that the organization monitored the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme - Palliative Ration to Households. The exercise was carried out at the 20 LGAs, 202 centres across 902 schools in Lagos for primary 1-3 pupil's households. Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, LASUBEB and LGAs were on ground and CSACEFA acted as independent observers. She added that 14 organisations were involved.

She identified the following observation:

1. COVID-19 protocols were duly observed and adhered to at all the centres.
2. Food rations were safe for consumption.
3. Transparency, accountability and sincerity were observed.

She said that sensitisation on Covid-19 and measures to protect themselves were carried out in Ikorodu, Epe, Lagos Island, Surulere and Mushin.

According to her, Post covid-19 plan by CSACEFA are:

1. To collaborate with Ministry of Health, Education and SUBEB in putting in place preventive measures against outbreak of any other pandemic in our public primary and secondary schools.
2. There should be health department in all public schools.
3. There should be provision of more classrooms to curb overcrowding.
4. There should be consistent education on response and cleanliness in schools across the state and availability of functional WASH facilities.
5. There should be adequate security for children.
6. Parents should constantly be informed on measures to be taken against diseases.

**Idowu** explained that, during COVID-19 lockdown, his organization, the International Climate Change Development Initiative (ICCDI), worked with different CSOs to carry out

interventions in four communities across Lagos to provide support to women and children to get back better from the pandemic.

He listed the group's activities to include:

- Creating Awareness & Prevention Response on COVID-19 In Eleko Ibeju, Lekki
- Supporting five different Primary Healthcare Centres in Shomolu LGA to fight against spread of COVID-19, where ICCDI encouraged residents to wash hands frequently, use antiseptics to clean household items, wear masks in public places, avoid meeting people with cold and cough symptoms, observe physical distance, avoid crowded places, and stay home as much as possible.
- #MaskUpCommunity Project: Building Community Resilience against COVID-19 in five communities across Lagos.
- Supporting communities to fight COVID-19 spread by avoiding body contact, including shaking hands; maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres, avoiding large gatherings – for us this means any group of 20 or more.
- The group is presently working on building healthcare support for women in three different LGAs in Lagos State.

**Abayomi** said the Lagos Civil Society Coalition Against Covid-19 conducted a Public Perception Survey on COVID-19 pandemic and responses in 20 LGAs and 37 LCDAs for the purpose of evaluating the existing level of information available to the public on COVID-19, knowledge about safety measures and observance of existing regulations for curtailing the spread of COVID-19.

He added that 235 respondents cutting across age brackets, gender, social/faith background, professionals, artisans, traders, peoples with disability (PWDs) and students, etc and comprising 85 (36.3%) females and 150 (64.7%) males participated in the survey.

The survey, Abayomi disclosed, revealed that robust information dissemination by the Lagos State Government through special public announcement, particularly in local languages and pidgin and regular media briefings by the Lagos State Ministry of Health and the Governor of Lagos State who is the COVID-19 Chief Incident Commander to a large extent helped in raising the level of consciousness about public health issues associated with COVID-19 and prompting safe consciousness amongst the general public.

Abayomi stated that the survey also revealed that conscious education and enlightenment should be deployed to deal with myths and negative perceptions that could be injurious to personal health as well as public health soon.

The survey, he went on, delivered several key recommendations with compelling responsibilities on state and non-state actors towards safeguarding public health. Abayomi stressed that the recommendations are, in the short term, envisioned for

further engagement with Lagos State COVID-19 Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), Lagos State Ministry of Health, and the Lagos State Chief Incident Commander of COVID-19, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu.

**Akosa** requested that the panelists should make concluding statements on the role of civil society organizations in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Unegbu:** To inform, and build capacity to mitigate against pandemic.

**Eseka:** Better collaboration between CSO and the government.

**Idowu:** Create investment opportunities in communities.

**Abayomi:** Advocacy

Moderator of the session, **Akosa**, said that CSOs should continue carrying out oversight functions and hold government accountable. She also suggested that CSOs should establish a network on biosecurity.



*Titilope Akosa, Founder of Centre for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Issues, while moderating the Panel Discussion Session Two*

**Thursday, 26 November 2020**

**DAY 2 - Presentations / Panel Discussion / Policy Makers and Researchers  
Interactive Session**

***Presentation 1: Organizing and resourcing an epidemic response in Lagos State***

- **Dr. Olusegun Ogboye (Permanent Secretary, Lagos MOH)**

Dr. Ogboye listed the objectives of the Covid-19 response in the state to include: coordinating enhanced preparedness to prevent importation of the virus through strengthening of points of entry; developing and articulating a response plan for containment in the event of importation; developing a risk communication strategy for engagement with the public; setting up and coordinating the functions of an EOC; developing diagnostic capacity: sequencing and procurement of primers; and isolating and treating all positives.

Part of the strategies deployed, according to him, include setting up Incident Command System and Emergency Operations Centre; building isolation capacity for the infected; developing capacity of the health workforce to deal with the epidemic-IPC, Case Management; opening communication channels for public access; strengthening media engagement and risk communication; and managing misinformation through social media.

Others are: procuring adequate stocks of PPE and consumables for testing; developing laboratory capacity for testing; strengthening logistics for transportation of samples and manpower and testing, isolating and treating.

He mentioned the critical success factors to include support of the Incident Commander; funding (Rapid Release); existence of BSL-3 laboratory; effective Epidemiology / Surveillance System; Previous preparation; support of the private sector as well as that of development partners.





*Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Ministry of Health, Dr. Olusegun Ogboye, during his presentation*

### ***Presentation 2: Strengthening Africa's Resilience in Tackling Emerging Biosecurity Threats: Lessons from Covid-19 Pandemic***

- **Mr. Tunji Bello (Commissioner, Lagos MOE&WR)**

Bello described biosecurity as measures that are taken to stop the spread or introduction of harmful organisms to human, animal and plant life. Such harmful organisms are prevalent in the ways we dispose our wastes from our homes, schools, markets, offices amongst others.

He said COVID-19 pandemic has posed major environmental challenges particularly in the management of municipal solid waste (MSW) and hazardous biomedical waste management.

Bello stressed that proper management of our municipal waste is of primary importance to the extent that, the better we manage our waste, the less disposed we are to biosecurity issues or threats. According to him waste management is considered to be one of the most serious environmental problems confronting developing countries, Lagos is no exception.

He suggested that, to address the issue, waste management strategies that are advanced, yet easy to implement and have measurable outcomes, are required. Some of these initiatives, according to him, are: Waste Segregation to support Recycling; Establishment of Transfer Loading Stations (TLSs) / Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs);

Waste Conversion; Development of Integrated Waste Management Facilities (Engineered Landfills) - Ogun State option; effective Management of medical waste; Training and professionalism; Building technical capacity of Local Government Officials and Public enlightenment and awareness.

He concluded that waste management must be seen as a health issue.

***Presentation 3: Covid-19 Safety Protocol Compliance: The Oyo State model adopting Indigenous Practice, Media Partnership and GIS Technology***

- **Prof. Olanike Adeyemo (Deputy Vice Chancellor, UI)**

She explained that a lot of public sensitization were carried out in the state. Also, that indigenous methods of containment were used to address non-compliance with protocol.

She added that the state also partnered journalists to do investigative reporting as well as the use of social media.

***Presentation 4: Role of private sector in public health response***

- **Dr. Olamide Okulaja (Director of Advocacy and Programme Development at PharmAccess Foundation)**

He said it is important to engage the private sector because they are well organized. According to him, private sector watches government, identify gaps and explore how they can fill in those gaps and supplement public sector activities.

Okulaja explained further that private sector can quickly respond to health emergency because they are not burdened by public sector bureaucracy and that private sector need to be involved in building a strong public health system.

He said we spend money to respond but fail to invest in maintaining the momentum of response.



*Director of Advocacy and Program Development at PharmAccess Foundation, Dr. Olamide Okulaja, during his presentation*

#### ***Presentation 5: Lagos State biosecurity and One Health strategy***

- **Dr. Babatunde Saka (Executive Secretary, GET Consortium)**

He said it is important to engage the private sector because they are well organized. According to him, private sector watches government, identify gaps and explore how they can fill in those gaps and supplement public sector activities.



*GET Executive Secretary, Dr. Babatunde Saka, during his presentation*

## ***Panel Discussion***

**Topic: Covid-19 Vaccine Production: What is the hope of Africa?**

**Moderator: Prof. Oyewale Tomori**

**Panellists:**

- 1. Prof. Oyewale Tomori**
- 2. Dr. Alexander Ochem**

**Dr. Ochem** questioned why Africans are leading Vaccine production outside the continent but could not do the same back home. He emphasized that it is difficult to develop vaccine with bear hands, adding that unless Africa make its own vaccine, there is no hope.

**Ochem** said that Africa depends on crumbs from donors. He warned that we will continue to depend on others and that we would only have vaccine when others have exhausted their needs.

**Prof. Tomori** said that no vaccine is fully approved for now, we are a known participatory consumer for vaccine. That Africa should not just be a perceive consumer of vaccine but be a part of the process. He concluded that Nigeria should set up just one committee on vaccine and that people must be ready to tell the government the truth.

## ***Presentation 6: Public Private Partnerships for COVID-19 Response and Global Health Security***

- **Martina Szobo (Lead, Business Engagement and Strategy, Covid-19 Action Platform, World Economic Forum)**

Describing the COVID Action Platform as the largest private sector-led effort to fight the pandemic, she said it comprises 1,200 organisation, is undertaking 42 projects, and embarked upon 15 public briefings.

According to her, while world's leading 3D printing manufacturers provided ventilators, masks, swabs, face shields and more to hospitals across Europe, Australia, USA, Asia Pacific and China, the COVID Response Alliance for Social Entrepreneurs is supporting 50,000 social entrepreneurs, with an impact on 1.4 billion people, working to serve the needs of excluded, marginalized and vulnerable groups in other 190 countries.

The Partnership for Evidence-Based Response to COVID-19, she added, produces bi-weekly updates, regional reports and over two dozen country reports which provide recommendations to governments and decision-makers.

Additionally, UpLink sourced over 200 innovative solutions to COVID-19 challenges and hand-picked 15 innovators who are now receiving support to scale the impact of their venture.

Furthermore, Mastercard, Wellcome, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation launched a “COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator” to coordinate R&D efforts and remove barriers to drug development and scale-up.



*Martina Szabo (Lead, Business Engagement and Strategy, COVID Action Platform, World Economic Forum) during her online presentation*



## Policy Makers and Researchers Interactive Session

### *Remarks 1:*

- **Prof. Akin Abayomi (Commissioner for Health, Lagos State)**

Prof. Abayomi said Africa is developing mega cities. That apart from Cairo, Lagos is number one, adding that there are increasing number of infectious diseases by far more than ever imaging. From the Covid-19 picture red dots are all over, prominent in the northern hemisphere. He said that there is indeed a real problem around the world now.

### *Remarks 2:*

- **Dr. Samuel Yeniy (WHO Nigeria Representative)**

Dr. Yeniy commended the Lagos State government for the way it handles Covid-19 challenges till day. He said his organization has been involved in the process from the beginning, we were there and saw what the Lagos state government did.

He stressed that the conference theme and time was very appropriate because of what is happening now, adding that the entire world is having increasing spread of pathogens of high consequence due to rapid mobility, technology advancement among others.

Yeniy disclosed that his organization rendered assistance in building capacity especially at the laboratory. He added that the government should start developing another biosecurity roadmap since the current one will soon be obsolete.

He urged the policy makers to invest in preparedness and surveillance at all levels down to the local government. He emphasized that no disease would remain eradicated or contain until members of the state participate in global practices.

### *Remarks 3:*

- **Dr. Danisa Levin (Representative of the National Security Adviser)**

Dr. Levin said that in the last 20 years there was a paradigm shift to the microbes and that biosecurity is important to the National Security. He added that Lagos is providing leadership in biosecurity and biobank.

He explained that the greatest threat to biosecurity is inside threat, urging that the Lagos state government into human development.

#### **Remarks 4:**

- **Prof. Oyewale Tomori**

Prof. Tomori expressed delight in what the Lagos state government is doing in tackling biosecurity. He urged the government to adopt policies that will turn Nigeria around, not just for good but to be the best, policies that will create conducive and enabling environment for the smarter generation of Nigerian of today.

He said we have the human resources, talented researchers, and that what separates the Nigerian researchers and the counterparts abroad is the enabling and the conducive environment to function.

#### **Remarks 5:**

- **Dr. Tomi Coker (Ogun State Commissioner for Health)**

Dr Coker said Lagos and Ogun states government had a collaboration. That the response was on communication and collaboration, and that the NCDC led the coordination. She disclosed that Lagos state was in the state of preparedness when Covid-19 struck but Ogun state had to prepare and respond at the same time. She said the governor led the state response.

She explained that the state watched what was going on in Lagos for it to respond effectively. She added that Lagos has been gracious to Ogun, that we can learn from each other and there is no need to reinvent the wheel.

Coker emphasized the need to formulate policy around regions and not states because not all states are viable to operate independently.



*Hon. Commissioner for Health in Ogun State, Dr. Tomi Coker, during her presentation*

**Remarks 6:**

- **Dr. Ogbuagu Onyema (Yale University)**

Speaking on *Vaccine Study Updates and Roll out in Africa*, Dr Onyema observed that the race to an effective vaccine is on, with innovation at work and more efficient running of clinical trials. He described the field for vaccine development as crowded, adding that many will not advance, and predicting a ~7% chance for those in preclinical studies.

According to him, preliminary approvals have occurred without robust data, adding that regulatory oversight is variable and not harmonized globally. He fears that political interference has impacted scientific and regulatory processes and feeding public distrust.

Dr Onyema noted that short term safety events have occurred, and long-term safety data is needed. This, he contended, may vary by vaccine technology.

He disclosed that manufacturing issues have arisen and will arise with efforts to mass produce vaccines in short period.

While observing that diversity in enrollment has been a challenge and is relevant to the African community, he stated that vaccine efficacy is not the same as real world effectiveness.

**Remarks 7:**

- **Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu (Lagos State Governor)**

Mr. Governor acknowledged the former Health commissioner in Lagos state, Dr. Jide Idris, Health Commissioners from Lagos and other states, Permanent Secretaries, members of diplomatic corps, Lagos state team and Prof. Oyewole Tomori.

He reemphasized the critical role of leadership and access to it in managing the Covid-19 challenge, and the need to be sure of what the government is doing.

This, he said, led to the creation of a seven-man war cabinet to take decisions on behalf of the 42 cabinet members to ensure stability of the situation.

He put his weight behind the need to do more collaboration at a time we are in, adding that there is no need to reinvent the wheel.

Mr. revealed that the state government will dedicate part of the budget in 2021 to review of Covid-19 lessons, adding that there is also the need to be on ground and strengthened institutions.

He said the state will commence building of the infectious disease centre to be named Africa Infectious Disease Centre, that it is designed to meet international standard.

He said his administration is committed because they want to leave the state better than the way they met it. He said his administration will increase the budget for health and education because no achievement can be made without the two.



*Executive Governor of Lagos State, His Excellency, Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu, giving a speech at the Conference*



*Hon. Commissioner for Health in Lagos State, Prof. Akin Abayomi, and the Executive Governor of Lagos State, His Excellency, Babajide Sanwoolu, observing the National Anthem*

**Friday, 27 November 2020**

**DAY 3 - Presentations / Abstract presentations**

***Presentation 1: Biosafety in Africa: Turning risk into opportunities in Africa's food systems in the context of climate change and Covid-19 emergencies***

- **Dr. Richard Munang (UNEP Africa Regional Climate Change Programme Coordinator)**

Dr. who presented his paper virtually said many African countries are confronted with the climate change challenge already threatening agricultural production and other risks such as flood. He cited the example of Nigeria that lost about 3.8 per cent of its GDP to biosafety risks linked to farming.

Other factors he listed affecting food production in the continent include use of unregulated fertilizers, noncompliance to regulation, funding challenge, lack modern technology among others. He added that many Africans are hungry and depend on unsaved practices to put food in their stomach.

The UNEP Africa Regional Climate Change Programme coordinator said extreme events already exacerbated by climate change will compound biosafety threats in the continent.

He emphasized that a wholistic approach to address biosafety risks in Africa cannot happen in a vacuum, saying we are talking of climate change that will make Covid-19 worsen, other emergencies will come.

He said for Africa to address biosafety issues, it must look into the informal sector which is very crucial; promote use of ecosystem based approaches; empower African youths to be provider of tools for compliance and provide accessible and affordable finance.

Munang emphasized that Africa needed to create not less than 17 million jobs every year in an economy that is already described as less productive.



*Dr. Richard Munang (UNEP Africa Regional Climate Change Programme Coordinator) during his online presentation*

## ***Presentation 2: Presentation on Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)***

- **Niniola Williams (Managing Director, DRASA)**

Describing Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) as a COVID-19 response, Williams stated that the IPC is a science and practice, as well as about creating a safe environment that requires expertise. Under the Lagos State Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), she listed IPC pillar activities to include: Training, Site Assessment, Monitoring & Evaluation, and Guidelines & SOPs.

She disclosed that 4,237 personnel have been trained, 53 COVID-19 centres assessed and that monitoring of eight COVID-19 treatment centers is ongoing to review IPC protocols and staff welfare. She added that 192 health care worker infections have been tracked, and 16 IPC SOPs and guidelines developed and disseminated.

Williams identified the way forward for IPC to include: Sustaining momentum, funding and resources; establishing IPC Programs at the national, state and facility levels; ensuring multi-sector stakeholder engagement at points of entry, and schools.



*Niniola Williams (Managing Director, DRASA) during her presentation*

***Presentation 3: Beyond the Physical/Visible burden of Biosecurity Threats across Africa: Can there be Resilience without incorporating Mental Health Strategies?***

- **Dr. Margaret Ojeahere (Director, Neotic Minders Health services)**

According to Dr. Ojeahere, the burdens of biosecurity threats are: Increased risk of morbidity and mortality (severe injuries, hemorrhages, fractures, etc); Disruptions in health service delivery; Socioeconomic impact; Losses (properties, jobs, support systems); Deprivation of basic amenities; Food shortage; and Population movements.

Shedding some light on the burden of mental health in Africa, she emphasised that there is wide mental health gap compared to developed countries; Africa has 1.4 mental health workers per 100,000 people (global average of 9.0 per 100,000); many African countries allocate less than 1% of the health budget to mental health; for Africa as a whole, government mental health expenditure per capita is \$0.1; legislature and human rights protection still lacking; in 2017, only 40% of WHO member states had updated their legislation in the previous five years; and Africa has the lowest rate at 21%.

She lamented that despite increasing biosecurity threats and global burden of mental illness, there has been the neglect of mental health, typified for example by the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board of WHO in its first annual report in September 2019 excluded mental health; omission of mental health among the six indicators on



the Global Health Security index; and impossibility in attaining targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) such as malaria, HIV, poverty, gender empowerment, maternal and child and education.

She concluded by saying that even though the COVID-19 pandemic ensured physical and emotional isolation, insecurity, increasing mental health conditions and stigma on individuals globally, it nonetheless presents an opportunity to develop long-term plans for mental health and public health.



*Dr. Margaret Ojeahere (Director Neotic Minds Health Services) during her presentation*

#### ***Presentation 4: Global Response to Covid-19 pandemic: Building resilient climate future***

- **Prof. Jimmy Adegoke (University of Missouri-Kansas USA)**

Prof. Adegoke said there is a nexus between infectious diseases and the environment. According to him, 75 per cent of all emerging diseases come from wildlife, the loss and degradation of natural habitats is a key driver of emerging infectious diseases from wildlife and how we produce our food has the potential to drive pandemics in addition to being a key factor in land conversion.

Adegoke disclosed that the wildlife trade brings wildlife into close contact with people and provides microbes the opportunity to mix between species and that climate change in the longer term is likely to be a growing driver of the emergence of zoonotic disease outbreaks, alongside land use change, food and the wildlife trade.



He stressed that the outbreak and spread of Covid-19 and other emerging diseases are largely triggered and facilitated by increased human interaction with nature and the surrounding environment while the loss of biodiversity and human encroachment on natural ecosystems increases contact with wildlife and consequently accelerate the transmission potential of these pathogens.

Prof. Adegoke added that climate change is a global threat to development and is eroding the modest gains that Africa has made. According to him, African states spend about 2 per cent of their GDP annually to combat climate change. He added that climate change could wipe about \$2.5 trillion of the world's financial assets if global mean surface temperature rises above its pre-industrial level of 2deg C by 2100.

He stressed the need to prioritize natural capital investment for ecosystem resilience and regeneration.

#### ***Presentation 5: Presentation on Lagos Biobank Project***

- **Dr. Bamidele Mutiu (Director Lagos State Biobank)**

Dr Mutiu noted that Lagos mega city with an estimated population of 24 million inhabitants, biological threats is a reality as a result of human density and the associated mental stress. He listed part of the activities his organization embarked on during the Covid-19 pandemic to include creation of digital platform and tools to manage sample and data streams, and detail functionality to improve: the pre-laboratory phase (test ordering, sample packaging, and shipping); the preanalytical phase (sample registration, tracking, and test prioritization [triaging]), and the postanalytical phase (automated reporting and facilitating data-driven policymaking).

Besides, that the pandemic created unexpected opportunities in which the COVID-19 crisis accelerated the adoption of practices that promote the meaningful use of LIMS. He specifically, mentioned the role played by Lagos Biobank Project during the pandemic to include diagnosis and follow up of cases; Biobanking of VBM, Nasopharyngeal Swabs, Sputum, Blood, Plasma; samples processed; validation of rapid test kits for POCT; Viral propagation and development of Elisa platform.

On the way forward, he suggested sustainability, bio-economy, vaccine development, public private partnership in commercialization of research, research collaborations through grants, direct funding by the State Government, creation of an agency of Biosecurity and strengthening of the One Health paradigm.



*Dr. Bamidele Mutiu (Director, Lagos State Biobank, during his presentation*

#### ***Presentation 6: Biobank during the Covid-19 pandemic***

- **Prof. Jim Vaught (Guest Professor, Central South University, Changsha China)**

Vaught said although often operating in the background, biobanking plays a critical role in the diagnosis and development of treatments for a variety of diseases, adding that as we witness the urgent international efforts to develop diagnostic tests, vaccines and other therapies for the current Covid-19 pandemic, patient sample collection, processing and analysis are at the forefront of this emergency.

He added that the vast scope of the Covid-19 pandemic, with over 23 million cases globally as at late August 2020, means that many laboratories and biobanks are likely to be handling samples involved in developing diagnostic and vaccines.



*Prof. Jim Vaught (Guest Professor, Central South University, Changsha China) during his online presentation*

### **Presentation 7: Biosecurity and Biothreat reduction in Africa**

- **Katherine Budeski and Dr. Wilmot James**

Budeski said biosecurity and biosafety measures mitigate the international and accidental biological risks that pose potentially catastrophic consequences to a country's health system, security, and political and economic stability.

She noted that unfortunately, they are often under-prioritised globally and de-emphasised relative to other challenges to peace and security. Given emerging biological risks, she said, biosecurity and biosafety deserve a stronger emphasis in the health and security fora.

Wilmot corroborated her that the Global Biosecurity Dialogue (GBD) was initiated to align national and regional donor initiatives toward a common set of measurable targets. He explained that the GBD was launched by the Nuclear Threat Initiative, with support from Global Affairs Canada's Weapons Threat Reduction Program and the Open Philanthropy Project, and in coordination with the government of The Netherlands as the 2018-19 Chair of the Global Health Security Agenda Action Package Prevent-3 on Biosafety and Biosecurity.

He added the African Union and Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) launched the regional Biosafety and Biosecurity Initiative to strengthen biosafety and biosecurity in Africa.

***Presentation 8: Innovative Technologies for Biobanking and Fighting Infectious Diseases***

- **Dr. Wlodek Mandecki (President, PharmaSeq, Inc)**

Dr. Mandecki listed the objectives of the Covid-19 response in the state to include: coordinating enhanced preparedness to prevent importation of the virus through strengthening of points of entry; developing and articulating a response plan for containment in the event of importation; developing a risk communication strategy for engagement with the public; setting up and coordinating the functions of an EOC; developing diagnostic capacity: sequencing and procurement of primers; and isolating and treating all positives.

***Presentation 9: Using mathematical modelling to inform health policy***

- **Prof. Michel Tchuente (Centre for Economics and Costing, Avenir Health)**

While stressing that mathematical and computational models have proven useful when addressing the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, Prof. Tchuente submitted that the mathematical models can be used to analyze epidemic spreading in public health epidemiology, and also help overcome problem of sparse observations, as well as inference with missing data.

He stated that the Decision Makers' Program Planning Toolkit, Version 2 (DMPPT 2) has demonstrated its wide-ranging potential and use, thus:

- Tool for advocacy - Impact and cost of scaling-up VMMC
- Strategic planning - Model customized by 5-year age bands and geography
- Program monitoring - Online user-friendly.

He said that the DMPPT 2 success can serve as a blueprint for others looking to apply modeling to inform policy, adding that nine VMMC priority countries incorporated outputs from the DMPPT 2 modeling exercise into their program planning.

Prof. Tchuente disclosed that the process worked closely with VMMC in-country stakeholders in Malawi, South Africa, Eswatini, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Namibia, Lesotho, and Mozambique.

## **Abstracts Presentations**

### ***Presentation 1: Lagos Covid-19 response and impacts of social media: A case study of Prof. Akin Abayomi's tweets***

- **Titilope Akosa**

Akosa noted that social media platforms have proven to be effective tools for messaging or marketing in an increasingly globalized world. According to her, while robust engagement on politics, democracy and governance have been strengthened by the various social platforms, the Twitter in particular appears to be unique as actors in governance deploy the medium for active, real time and continuous engagement with stakeholders.

She explained said the Lagos State Commissioner for Health, Prof. Akinola Abayomi, effectively deployed his twitter handle as vehicle for discharging the crucial responsibility of containing Covid-19 pandemic at the epicenter in Nigeria. She added that Prof. Abayomi's twitter handle provided the much-needed impetus for information and updates that keeps media establishments, media actors, citizens' journalists, civil society organisations, social media influencers, groups and individuals regularly abreast of developments on Covid-19.

### ***Presentation 2: Assessment of six SARS-COV-2 rapid IGM-IGG combined antibody tests using capillary whole blood samples from the fingertip***

- **Adefunke Amodu**

Amodu in her presentation said Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona Virus 2 (SARS-COV 2) is the causative agent of a novel infectious respiratory disease now known as COVID-19. Adding that the gold standard test adopted globally is the Real-Time reverse transcriptase polymerase chain (RT-PCR) in the detection of the presence of the virus in a suspect.

She however, stressed the need for a rapid diagnostic protocol is imperative considering the impact of the pandemic.

### ***Presentation 3: Effect of Covid-19 pandemic and its mitigating actions on blood transfusion services in Lagos State, Nigeria***

- **Osikomaiya Bodunrin**

Osikomaiya said the Lagos State Blood Transfusion Services (LSBTS) is responsible for the provision of safe blood in the state and coordinate activities between the government, partnering organisations and potential donors.

According to her, the study described the effect of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic on blood transfusion services in Lagos State, Nigeria, and proffered solutions. She explained that the Covid-19 pandemic had three main effects on blood transfusion services in Lagos State, including cancellation of all advocacy meetings and blood donation drives; lockdown measures limiting the free movement of donors; and fear for the safety of staff and volunteers.

She added that the measures taken by LSBTS were effective in mitigating the effect of the pandemic on blood transfusion services in Lagos State.

***Presentation 4: A large Covid-19 outbreak at a boarding school in Lagos, Nigeria, October 2020***

- **Bisola Adebayo**

Adebayo in her presentation disclosed that on October 6, 2020 the state received notification of a confirmed case of Covid-19 in a student attending a privately-owned secondary school in Lagos State. That the state investigated to identify additional cases, characterize the outbreak, and institute control measures.

She explained that the index case was a 14-year-old, year-10 female boarding student, who developed headache and fever seven days after resumption and that no household contact was positive. She said test was conducted on the index and contacts students.

She added that the study provides useful information for school re-opening in Lagos State.

***Presentation 5: Bridging science and intervention for Covid-19: An operational initiative for West and Central Africa***

- **Mamadou Diallo**

Diallo said to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, the World Health Organisation (WHO) Africa office set up regional platform to coordinate the operational response in West and Central Africa (WCA). He said under the platform, a group was devoted to operational research which brings together United Nations organisations, the main non-governmental organisations at the regional level, key research institutions and scientific experts engaged in Covid-19 research intervention.

Diallo explained that the group aims at including operational research into the response through facilitating exchanges between scientists and other actors, promoting science-based interventions and allowing the development of new research projects relevant to WCA.

He added that activities of the Operational Research Group (ORG) are coordinated by Institut de recherche pour le developpement (IRD) and WHO.

***Presentation 6: Antimicrobial resistance pattern across two states in Nigeria- A descriptive/Observational study***

- **Helen Amadu**

Adamu explained that antimicrobial resistance has been declared as a threat to countries and that the aim of the study was to analyse antimicrobial resistance patterns of the common pathogens occurring in two states in Nigeria.

She explained that a retrospective analysis of microbiological culture results from private and public laboratories between January and April 2016 in Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) was conducted.

According to her, the survey revealed rising rate of antimicrobial resistance to commonly used antibiotics and that prudent use of antibiotics to limit the spread of antimicrobial resistance was recommended.

***Presentation 7: Mortality trend and factors associated with poor outcome among Covid-19 patients treated in 15 isolation centres in Lagos State***

- **Dr Olusola A. Adejumo**

Dr. Adejumo explained that many PCR confirmed Covid-19 cases have been managed in Lagos State since the first case was diagnosed on February 27, 2020. He said a review of the factors associated with poor outcomes of Covid-19 patients managed in Lagos state in 2020 was conducted.

He disclosed that records of all PCR-confirmed Covid-19 patients managed in 15 isolation centres between 27 February 2020 and 30 September were reviews and that regression analysis was used to assess associated factors with poor outcome.

He stressed that public health measure at ensuring prevention of Covid-19 must be sustained.



*Dr. Adejumo during his abstract presentation*

**Presentation 8:**

- **Prof. Folashade Ogunsola**

As a country, covid-19 has been a blessing of sort because it has helped us to dig deep and actualise a lot of our potentials, submits Prof. Ogunsola.

She noted that the predictions on fatalities of the pandemic did not reckon with the resilience of Africa, adding that there is a lot to learn from Africa on the pandemic.

Prof. Ogunsola congratulated Lagos government for the work they have done as a result of the strategies and efforts put into it.





*Professor Folasade Ogunsola (Nigerian Professor of Medical Microbiology, University of Lagos) during her presentation*



*Abstract Presenter from the Lagos State Ministry of Health*



*Abstract Presenter from the Lagos State Ministry of Health*



*Abstract Presenter from the Lagos State Ministry of Health*



*Abstract Presenter from the Lagos State Ministry of Health*



*Conference Participants*

## Conference Takeaway

Lagos State Commissioner for Health, Prof. Akin Abayomi, in his closing remarks said it is always exciting to close the meeting that has brightened the family of biosecurity which always come together annually in Africa.

According to him, because of the meetings, there have been so much information available to experts and policy makers. He added that the meeting brought together security, environmental, agriculture and experts from all fields of subject to discuss issues.

He hinted that there would be a very big meeting to look at how they manage 2020 Covid-19 and how to help the African continent.

Abayomi thanked all participants from within and outside the country for attending the meeting. He said the venue for the 2021 meeting would be announced later.



*Hon. Commissioner for Health in Lagos State, Prof. Akin Abayomi, giving a closing remark*

## **Announcement of the location of the 7<sup>th</sup> Conference in 2021**

The COO of GET, Dr Ayodotun Bobadoye, stated that the location of the next conference would be announced in due course.

He gave a vote of thanks.



*GET COO, Dr Bobadoye Ayodotun, giving a vote of thanksgiving*



## More images from the conference



*Hon. Commissioner for Health in Lagos State, Prof. Akin Abayomi, and the Executive Governor of Lagos State, His Excellency, Babajide Sanwoolu, well seated at the conference venue*



*All participants Observing the National Anthem*



*Rear view of conference participants*



*Side view of conference participants*





*Representatives from the International Embassies in Nigeria*



*The Executive Governor of Lagos State-His Excellency, Babajide Sanwoolu's departure from the Conference Venue*