

The East, Central and Southern African College of Nursing (ECSACON)

CONCEPT PAPER

**The East, Central and Southern African College of Nursing (ECSACON)
12th Scientific Conference 7-9 September, Nairobi Kenya.**

Main Theme: Nurses and Midwives for Universal Health Coverage

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The East, Central and Southern African College of Nursing (ECSACON) is a professional body of Nurses and Midwives in the East Central and Southern Africa region. The college derives its membership from the following countries: Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

ECSACON was inaugurated in 1990 and its membership is made up of the following:

- Individual nurses and midwives from the member countries
- Regulatory bodies (nursing and midwifery councils) from all the ECSACON member states
- Professional associations for nurses and midwives drawn from the ECSACON member states

Some of the mandates of ECSACON include:

- Strengthening nursing and midwifery education, practice, management, including leadership and research in order to effectively respond to health issues of the region
- Providing leadership in nursing and midwifery and
- Facilitating national, regional, international and interdisciplinary collaboration for the benefit of health and well-being of the people in ECSA region

The region is currently experiencing many health challenges that include high disease burden, emerging and re-emerging diseases like Ebola, inequitable access to health care, economic crisis, harmful cultural taboos, tribal wars and poverty, all of which militate against the achievement of universal health coverage.

To address some of the challenges, ECSACON in collaboration with various stakeholders and partners will hold its 12th Scientific Conference in Nairobi, Kenya from 7-9 September 2016. This will be one of the scientific conferences held after every 2 years. The purpose of the conference is to explore and share research findings, best practices including high impact interventions as well as experiences and challenges attained along the way in increasing access to health care for the people in ECSA region.

2.0. BACKGROUND

It is known globally, that nurses and midwives constitute about 80% of the health workforce and form the backbone of the health system. By virtue of their numbers, and their independent and collaborative roles in providing health services, nurses and midwives have the potential to influence and cause acceleration in moving towards the achievement of the Universal Health Coverage.

Given the need to accelerate progress towards attaining Universal Health Coverage coupled with the globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals, nurses and midwives cannot afford to do things the way they have always done them. They have to re-examine critically, through research, their usual traditions and routines so as to be creative in coming up with new innovations and document best practices for sharing with others on such platforms as international conferences.

There is now a greater need than before, for ECSACON to promote the implementation of evidence-based practices in tackling the regional challenges. It is against this background that ECSACON is proposing to hold a Scientific Conference whose theme is **“Nurses and Midwives for Universal Health Coverage”**

2.1 Regional challenges

- HIV and AIDS
Since the beginning of the epidemic, almost 78 million people have been infected with the HIV virus and about 39 million people have died of HIV. Globally, 35.0 million [33.2–37.2 million] people were living with HIV at the end of 2013. Sub-Saharan Africa remains most severely affected, with nearly 1 in every 20 adults living with HIV and accounting for nearly 71% of the people living with HIV worldwide. The majority of whom either are on treatment or will soon be enrolled in treatment considering the global advocacy for treatment of HIV/AIDS. This on its own has got impact on Human Resources for Health (HRH) includes attrition; HRH absent due to HIV related sickness and increased workload as a result of AIDS related opportunistic infections.
- Reappearance of TB which affects approximately, one third of the world's population with the majority of cases found in the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). In addition to that, we are currently seeing the increasing MDR TB as well as XDR TB which complicates the TB management.
- High fertility as high as 6.5 -7. for the African woman in the SSA and this has led to some of the world's highest rates of infant and maternal mortality, resulting in loss of human capital, poverty, and stagnant economic growth.
- Shortage of health care workers coupled with poor distribution of qualified health workers & an inadequate human resource system to support them.
- Maternal Mortality Ratio has similarly remained unchanged in many countries although some countries are making progress but in small pace.

- Political instability in some countries taking an example of South Sudan whose achievements are prone to retraction from time to time.

Indeed there are many challenges and these create an urgent need for clear evidence to explain why and what steps to be undertaken to address them. In view of this, ECSACON is proposing to hold a Scientific Conference.

3.0 THE PROPOSED SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

The proposed Scientific Conference will bring together a multidisciplinary group of participants including nursing/midwifery clinicians, leaders, researchers, educators, medical doctors, partners, sociologists, Nutritionists, and experts in various fields like health planners , health profession regulators etc. The conference will set the stage for the delegates to pool their ideas together. This is all the more important during these strategic period countries are laying down strategies towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals number.

4.0 THEME & SUB-THEMES

Main Theme: Nurses and Midwives for Universal Health Coverage .

Sub-themes

- 1.Improving access to quality Maternal, New-born and Child Health services
- 2.Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and Gender Based Violence
- 3.Innovations in Health Workforce Development for the 21st Century
- 4.Innovations and excellence in providing Evidence Based Nursing and Midwifery care across life span
- 5.Prevention and control of Communicable and Non-Communicable diseases including Mental Health and Nutrition

5.0. OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

5.1 Main Objective

The main objective is to explore and share research findings, best practices (high impact interventions) as well as experiences on how nursing and midwifery will accelerate Universal Health Coverage towards attainment of Sustainable Development Goals.

5.2. Specific Objectives

1. To Share ideas and learn how Nursing and Midwifery fraternity can facilitate acceleration towards achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.
2. To share experiences on innovations towards strengthening human resources for health for effective health services delivery through nurses and midwives.
3. To disseminate best practices and innovative ideas in increasing access to health care delivery.
4. To learn about evidence based practices in sexual, reproductive health, maternal and child health services provision through sustainable partnerships.
5. To share evidences towards mitigating the impact of alarming communicable and non-communicable diseases the case in point Ebola.
6. To make recommendations on the way forward in transforming nursing and midwifery to adopt innovative strategies in order to accelerate achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and UHC

6.0. OUTPUTS OF THE CONFERENCE

- Ideas on how nurses and midwives can facilitate acceleration towards the achievement of Universal Health Coverage as part of Sustainable Development Goals
- Better understanding of health challenges in the region achieved
- Experiences on innovative ways towards strengthening Human Recourses for Health management for Universal Health Coverage
- Evidence-based practices in improving maternal, new-born and child health as the region are shared.
- Strategies to mitigate the impact of communicable and non-communicable diseases shared and adopted.
- Recommendations on innovative strategies to improve the performance of nursing and midwifery professions to respond to current and future challenges agreed on.
- Interest-group meetings and parallel skills building sessions conducted
- Expanded networks of members, stakeholders, partners and collaborators enhanced.

7.0. PARTICIPANTS

Participants will include a multidisciplinary group comprising of nursing/midwifery clinicians, researchers and educators and other related professions in the region as well as from beyond the region. ECSACON partners and stakeholders from the region including invited members from the Ministries of Health, NGOs at national, regional and international level and members of the public will also be invited to attend. For dissemination and political awareness creation, national, regional and international media houses will also be encouraged to attend and provide coverage of the major issues.

8.0. DATE AND VENUE

The conference will be held from 7-9 September , 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya.

9.0 METHODOLOGY

9.1 Pre-conference Seminars

Pre-conference seminars and workshops will be held for topical issues

There will be intra-Conference seminars, side meetings and other pertinent activities.

There will be room for partners to link their activities also on this conference, taking the advantage of the presence of the policy-makers (Chief Nursing Officers, Registrars of Nursing/Midwifery Councils, presidents of Nursing Associations, programme directors and officers).

9.2 Pre- Conference Planning Committee Meetings

Two pre-conference committee meetings are proposed to ensure that the conference will be successful. The first one will be for a panel of experts that includes the faculties of Research and Education chairpersons. The purpose of this Committee is to review the abstracts and approve those for presentation during the conference.

The other meeting will bring the ECSACON Executive Committee together to deliberate and give direction as to how the conference should be organised, conducted and steered to the stage of making implementable recommendations and resolutions.

These recommendations and resolutions will be carried forward to the next ECSA Health Ministers Conference for regional policy consideration.

9.3 Conference

The conference will be held for three days from 7-9 September 2016. It will be conducted through a number of methods including plenary presentations, parallel sessions, workshops, exhibitions, discussions and poster sessions, short skills building sessions and evening interest group meetings.

A call for abstracts was sent to all member countries and beyond. A link on the ECSACON website has been created where participants can access information on abstract submission and registration. There will be invited speakers for the theme and sub-themes. The resolutions will be specific in terms of the target, when and the type of resources needed. A mechanism for monitoring implementation of the conference resolutions will be developed and followed.

9.4. Organisation Including Roles and Responsibilities

The ECSACON Secretariat will be responsible for preparations and convening the conference. The Local Organising Committee has been put in place to undertake the preparations in Kenya. The members of the Executive Committee and the Council of National Representatives (CNR) will be briefed of the preparations that will then be finalised.

The Local Organising Committee will arrange for the guest speaker during the official opening ceremony.

9.5 Post- Conference Planning Committee Meeting

The management and post-conference planning meeting will be held to chart the way forward in implementing the conference resolutions. Follow up actions, arising from the conference and pre-conference meetings/seminars will be documented clearly specifying what has to be done. The post conference planning meeting will produce this document. An implementation plan will be developed for the Secretariat, the regional and country levels. The ECSACON secretariat will coordinate the implementation of the resolutions and recommendations.

10.0. REPORT WRITING AND DISSEMINATION

A report of the conference and related meetings will be compiled by the Chief Facilitator and disseminated by the ECSACON Secretariat to all member country chapters, collaborators, stakeholders, delegates and other relevant parties.

11.0 ACTIVITY TIMELINE.

Preparations started in September, 2014. Therefore the time line below is for the activities yet to be implemented.

February 2016	Funding proposals sent out to our partners and collaborators
March 2016	Information on the conference to CNRs, CNOs, Registrars of Nurses/Midwifery Councils, Presidents of National Nurses Associations
April-May	Receive feedback on submitted funding proposals
April	Invitation of Guest speakers and key note presenters
May	Convene a team of experts to review abstracts and select ones for presentation- ORAL AND POSTER
August	Convene an ECSACON Executive Committee Meeting to review plans and preparations
May	Notify presenters of accepted abstracts
May	Develop conference programme and circulate for inputs
June	Compile an abstract book
June	Make travel arrangements for the CNR and other invited guests
June	Receive information about travel arrangements
July	Send the abstract book for printers
July- August 2016	Circulate final programme
August –September 2016	Conference and meetings
September	Report writing and dissemination of report and action plan

12.0 BUDGET

The proposed budget for this request will be expected to support the following:
Conference Package for 500 people, Travel, M&IE and accommodation costs for Council members /delegates attending pre-conference seminars, 3-4 key-note speakers, Secretariat staff (4), Facilitator and the facilitation fees, stationery, equipment hire and breakaway rooms for parallel sessions.