



SOCIETY FOR AIDS IN AFRICA

Organizer of the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA)

NEWSLETTER

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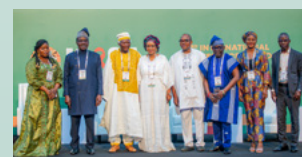
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THE GOVERNMENT
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ICASA⁺ 2027

24TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON AIDS AND STIs IN
AFRICA (ICASA)

5 - 9 DECEMBER 2027

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GOAL OF SAA FOR THE FIVE YEARS PERIOD

-  Is to contribute towards the UNAIDS goal and the AU catalytic framework of:
- Achieving the 95-95 targets by 2025,
 - Ending the AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030 in Africa,
 - Contributing to the African Union's Agenda 2063 and
 - Facilitating the strengthening of the health systems in Africa towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for health

SAA'S 5-YEAR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

-  SAA has the aim of remaining programmatically active
- and strategically positioned to advance its mission,
 - with a clear focus on strengthening partnerships,
 - enhancing institutional capacity,
 - and increasing its impact across Africa
-  To achieve these, the strategic direction and focus for the five years (2023 to 2027) have been to:
- Mobilize the continent to invest in the control of HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other emerging infections by organizing webinars, seminars and conferences and convening high level regional meetings in Africa.
 - Develop SAA's mandate as a platform and opportunity to tackle other emerging and re-emerging infections such as COVID-19, Ebola, Lassa Fever, Monkeypox in Africa
 - Build strong partnership with governments and health institutions in Africa towards strengthening the health systems
 - Advocate for domestic resource mobilization for the HIV, tuberculosis and malaria response as well as response to other emerging infectious diseases in Africa with the aim of preventing reduced funding for HIV, TB and malaria
 - Broaden partnerships with research institutions, international bodies, pharmaceutical companies, regional networks and key civil society organisations working on human rights and gender issues in the five African regions to facilitate community-led responses
 - Focus on creating spaces for adolescents and young people to share opinions and participate in decision-making on HIV, tuberculosis and malaria prevention and response in Africa.

THEMATIC AREAS

There are three (3) thematic areas for the 5years Strategic Plan

-  Institutional Capacity and Governance Systems Strengthening;
- Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy for Health Systems Strengthening

- Research, Knowledge Management and Strategic Information Sharing

✚ Ten (10) strategic objectives were spelled out under these 3 thematic areas

✚ each of them have key activities to be carried out within the 5 years with targets and measurable indicators in order for SAA to achieve its goal

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES UNDER THE 3 THEMATIC AREAS

A. Institutional Capacity and Governance Systems Strengthening

- Mobilise financial resources for SAA to implement the activities in the Strategic Plan
- Expand the focus of SAA to other emerging infectious diseases
- Increase SAA's visibility and membership
- Finalize the acquisition of the land and plan for building of the SAA Secretariat

B. Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy for Health Systems Strengthening

- Collaborate with institutions to strengthen health institutions and civil society organisations in Africa to respond to and manage infectious diseases.
- Strengthen partnerships and collaborations with Governments, research institutions and international bodies to respond adequately to HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and other emerging infections in Africa.
- Advocate for resource mobilization to prevent and respond to HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and other emerging infections in Africa

C. Research, Knowledge Management and Strategic Information Sharing

- Harness and disseminate evidence-based information on HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and other emerging infections' management and control for Africa
- Expand focus of activities to include sexual and reproductive health, gender equality and non-communicable diseases
- Strengthen SAA's organizational capacity to undertake effective communication and knowledge management on HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and other emerging infections

OBJECTIVES OF THE MID-TERM ASSESSMENT

✚ The primary objective of the mid-term review is to assess progress at the midpoint of the 2023–2027 Strategic Plan, to determine whether its strategic goals remain relevant and whether implementation is on track to achieve the intended outcomes.

✚ The review also seeks to:

- **Assess** the extent to which the Strategic Plan's priorities and strategic objectives have

been achieved.

- **Evaluate** performance against the established targets and key performance indicators.
- **Identify** internal and external factors, including emerging challenges and opportunities, that may necessitate adjustments to the implementation approach or key performance indicators in order to enhance the achievement of the intended results.
- **Provide** actionable recommendations to inform implementation during the remaining two years of the Strategic Plan.

METHOD USED FOR THE ASSESSMENT

Extensive review of the

- Annual Workplans and Annual Reports for activities carried out by SAA in 2023, 2024 and 2025 reports for ICASA 2023 and 2025
- two simple tools used to collect data from the staff and key board members

Assessment of the Key Indicators and

- Assessment of the Strategic Focus to look at the achievements, completed initiatives and pending milestones

Perspectives from key board members

- on the realization of the key strategic focus of the Strategic Plan and recommendations for achieving the needed results by the end of 2027

Meetings with the SAA Coordinator/ICASA Director and key staff to discuss and validate the results and report

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REVIEW

Presents the successes (for the years 2023, 2024 and 2025)

Highlights the achievements of key indicators for the various strategic objectives

Activities carried out to achieve these targets to date

Pending activities to be completed by 2027 with their targets

The challenges or bottlenecks encountered during the period

ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE KEY PROGRAMME INDICATORS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE KEY INDICATORS
A1. Mobilise financial resources for SAA to implement the activities in the Strategic Plan	• A Resource Mobilization plan was developed and is being actively implemented. • Amount of \$4,913,974 was mobilized through ICASA 2023 and 2025 Conferences 40 partners including donors, international organizations, embassies and foundations were identified and engaged Partnership agreements were signed with 2 partners (40% of the target of 5) One grant proposal was submitted within the period which was successful (100% success) 11 other conferences were organized for other organizations (target was at least 2 hence 550% achieved)
A2. Expand the focus of SAA to other emerging infectious diseases	7,000 delegates bags and pouches of conferences and meetings contained documentation from SAA on other infectious diseases (for ICASA 2023 and 2025) Newsletters were developed within the period (out of 5 i.e. 60%) Weekly updates done on the SAA website with current information on other emerging diseases (target of at least twice every year exceeded) 6 international conferences on other emerging infectious diseases attended by SAA Staff, Board or Members within the period 4 high-level advocacy meetings were held with other organizations on response to other emerging infectious diseases
A3. Increase SAA's Visibility and Grow Membership	• New members frequently joined SAA and 30 active members identified have been rewarded and maintained • 5 regional activities organized within the period
B5. Collaborate with institutions to strengthen health institutions and civil society organisations in Africa to respond to and manage infectious diseases	9 sub-regional consultative meetings for sharing best practices hosted within the period (target was 2 i.e. 450%)

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE KEY INDICATORS
B6. Strengthen partnerships and collaborations with Governments, research institutions and international bodies to respond adequately to HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and other emerging infections in Africa.	8 collaborative activities developed and carried out with strategic partners within the period 7 activities carried out to engage these key stakeholders in Africa on diseases response within the period 9 Collaborative activities developed and carried out with donors and bilateral partners involved in HIV, TB, malaria and emerging infectious diseases response in Africa
B7. Advocate for resource mobilization to respond to HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and other emerging infections in Africa.	5 Advocacy meetings held with African Union, Governments and Development Partners, donor agencies and foundations on Strategic financing to end AIDS in Africa by 2030, to fund research to address context specific HIV response and for governments to honour the Abuja Declaration 2 Advocacy Meetings held with Governments • 11,287 people participated in ICASA 2023 and 2025. • 96.2% of participants of the 2023 ICASA (who took part in the evaluation) affirmed their understanding of the objectives of the conference
C8. Harness and disseminate evidence-based information on HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and other emerging infections' management and control for Africa	• 95% of the participants for the 2025 ICASA (who took part in the evaluation) said they understood the conference objectives and felt their understanding of health system resilience improved • 72% said their expectations were met, with knowledge acquisition and networking as top outcomes. • 2 country reports developed from the presentations at ICASA (at least 3 within the period – 66.7%) the 3rd report will be developed on ICASA 2027 6 training webinars on generation of evidence based strategic information on HIV, TB, malaria and other emerging infectious diseases organized for health professionals
C9. Expand focus of activities to include sexual and reproductive health, gender equality and non-communicable diseases	5 virtual and in-person workshops on SRH, gender equality and NCD carried out One meeting held to launch AJAID scientific journal to disseminate research-based evidence on HIV, TB, malaria SRH, gender equality, NCD and other emerging diseases

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE KEY INDICATORS
C10. Strengthen SAA's organizational capacity to undertake effective communication and knowledge management on HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and other emerging infections	A capacity building plan developed for staff based on identified training needs
	17 staff participated in capacity building/training sections or courses
	5 training courses organized for SAA staff to build their knowledge and skills on HIV programming, research, effective communication and KM
	14 articles on health issues in Africa disseminated on online media established for SAA
Activities focusing on adolescents, young people and persons with disabilities 2023-2027	16 (320%) webinars held with adolescents, young people and persons with disabilities to harness their voices in strategic SAA decision-making processes (target was at least 5)
	4 (80% of target for the 5 years period) webinars and symposia held with adolescents and young persons on how they can use social and behaviour change (SBC) approaches to lead efforts in the prevention of these diseases among their peers
	2 (66.7%) ICASA Young Writers Series carried out to facilitate the sharing of experiences on SRH, HIV, mental health and harm reduction for adolescents and young people

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT

Organization of the 22nd and 23rd ICASAs in 2023 and 2025

- 11,287 participants from over 100 countries
- WHO, UNAIDS, UNFPA, WHO, and UNICEF renewed their partnerships with SAA
- Selection of host country for ICASA 2027 – MOU signed with the government of Benin

Webinar Series with the SAA Board

- hosted three (3) webinars in 2023
- organized a series of three (3) impactful webinars in 2024
- Organized six (6) webinars in 2025
- partnered with University of Ghana to support the inaugural lecture by the Dean of the School of Public Health on Ending HIV/AIDS in Africa:

Board Meetings

- 3 virtual board meetings and one in-person in 2023
- 4 virtual board meetings in 2024
- 3 virtual and two in-person meetings in 2025

SAA's Mentorship Programme launched in 2024, and 104 applications received from 32 countries in 2025

Establishment of the SAA Scientific Journal

- The Africa Journal of AIDS and Infectious Diseases (AJAID) which aims to provide a credible platform for African researchers to disseminate scientific findings and best practices
- SAA Membership Development
- development of the new platform aimed at allowing all SAA members to pay their membership fee via an e-platform

Signed an MOU with Stellenbosch University, South Africa

- offering short courses and post graduate educational programmes,
- conducting research,
- developing and implementing social impact projects,
- making knowledge and expertise available
- collaborating with specialists in various sectors

Partnership with Accountability International

- Joint advocacy for increased domestic health financing;
- Policy engagement and accountability initiatives;
- Promotion of human rights and reduction of stigma and discrimination;

- Collaboration around ICASA and broader public health advocacy platforms;
- Support for evidence-based advocacy and strategic policy dialogue

Participation in IAS

- IAS in 2023 in Brisbane, Australia, SAA in partnership with the West Africa Corridor organized a satellite session on Integrated Biomedical and Behavioral HIV Surveillance Survey among fishing community along the Abidjan – Lagos Corridor
- 2024 IAS in Germany gave SAA the opportunity to meet with various stakeholders including groups of activists and pharmaceutical companies ahead of ICASA 2025

Participation in NHARCON organized by the GAC - SAA provided technical support to

- Set-up and management of abstract submissions,
- Onsite management of faculty;
- Design of the conference Programme;
- Design and development of the NHARCON website;
- Design of the NHARCON conference Programme book;
- Train and management of Volunteers

Participation in AFRAVIH - a major French-speaking international conference on HIV, hepatitis, SRH, and emerging infections. SAA's participation was also to:

- Promote ICASA within Francophone Africa;
- Strengthen strategic partnerships and collaborations;
- Enhance SAA visibility within the Francophone HIV and public health community;
- Support SAA membership mobilization and engagement

Participation in INTEREST Conferences in Mozambique in 2023 and Namibia in 2025

- one of Africa's leading annual scientific conferences on HIV
- brings together researchers, clinicians, scientists, policymakers, and implementers working in treatment, pathogenesis, prevention, and related public health interventions
- SAA is provided with complimentary registrations and exhibition space to promote ICASA and SAA activities
- The partnership facilitates mutual visibility and collaboration between INTEREST and ICASA
- SAA utilizes the platform to market ICASA, strengthen partnerships, and recruit members
- SAA provided technical support through IT and conference systems support, Volunteer training and coordination and Conference management services

Participation in IMEX Frankfurt in 2023

- one of the world's leading international trade fairs for meetings, conferences, exhibitions, and incentive travel
- It brings together conference organizers, convention bureaus, tourism boards, hotels, venues, and event industry professionals from across the globe

SAA participated to

- promote SAA activities,
- expand professional networks,
- gain insights that will enhance the planning and delivery of future SAA programmes
- Learn how to develop SAA membership platform
- Learn the current trend in conference management system
- Promote ICASA as Africa's premier conference on HIV and emerging public health issues;
- Engage international conference organizers, sponsors, and partners;
- Explore opportunities for collaboration within the global meetings and events industry;
- Position Africa as viable destinations for major international scientific conferences

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Weekly Revamping of SAA's Website with accurate and up-to-date information
- SAA 2022, 2023 and 2024 Audits
- International Steering Committee (ISC) Meetings
- SAA hosted a joint session at the Regional Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health in Africa
- Celebrated World AIDS Day 2025 in Accra by donating 200 Mattresses to the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital
- Maintained strong relationships with over 200 pharmaceutical companies

PENDING ACTIVITIES (TO BE COMPLETED BY 2027)

- Develop annual newsletters for SAA ensuring the inclusion of evidence based information on other emerging diseases and disseminate them actively
- Produce annual newsletter to disseminate information on sexual and reproductive health, gender equality and non-communicable diseases
- Engage the Board of Director in strategic fundraising activities
- Develop call for bid for the new building of SAA Secretariat
- Support CSOs to conduct country level activities on HIV Scorecard
- Promote the conduct of country-level accountability forums on infectious diseases
- Hold webinars and symposia with adolescents and young persons on how they can use social and behaviour change (SBC) approaches to lead efforts in the prevention

diseases among their peers

- Organize annual grant proposal writing workshops for adolescents, young people and persons with disabilities for community-led monitoring activities
- ICASA Young Writers Series carried out to facilitate the sharing of experiences on SRH, HIV, mental health and harm reduction for adolescents and young people

KEY CHALLENGES AND BOTTLENECKS

- The declining global attention to HIV/AIDS – Increasing global focus on non-communicable and emerging diseases and pandemic preparedness reduced attention and funding for HIV-related interventions
- Human resource and institutional capacity constraints – Limited staffing and increasing programme demands affected implementation timelines and operational efficiency
- Low membership engagement and retention – Difficulty sustaining active participation and renewal among members across different regions
- Partnership and coordination complexities – Managing expectations and coordination among multiple stakeholders, partners, donors, and institutions have been very challenging
- Competition within the global conference and health space

CONCLUSIONS

- very evident from the findings that the various strategic focuses are being accomplished
- SAA was able to mobilize the continent to invest in the control and response to HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and her emerging infections through the organization of the webinars, seminars, ICASA and convening high-level regional meetings in Africa
- SAA was able to build strong partnerships with governments and health institutions in Africa towards strengthening the health systems
- SAA was also able broaden its partnerships with research institutions, international bodies, pharmaceutical companies, regional networks and key civil society organisations working on human rights and gender issues to facilitate community- led responses (MOUs signed)
- SAA was also able to create spaces for adolescents and young people to share opinions and participate in decision-making on HIV, TB and malaria prevention and response in Africa by organizing two ICASA Young Writers Series, webinars ad symposia
- It can be concluded that SAA achieved the targets for its strategic objectives stipulated for the period of review (between 2023 and 2025).
- These promising results achieved within the period confirm the:
- primary goal of the strategic plan has been very relevant within the current internal and external contexts
- and the progress made so far is a positive foundation for the remaining two years of the plan

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

🚫 To strategically empower the SAA's Permanent Secretariat to respond efficiently to its mandate,

- it is necessary that the board helps mobilize funds for both ICASA and SAA,
- especially to build the SAA Headquarters, stipulated in the strategic plan to be completed before the end of the period
- Establishing and completing the Ultramodern Headquarters for SAA will sustain additional activities for SAA especially the running of international TV and radio station programmes to aid the broadcasting of SAA's activities in country, in Africa and the world at large

🚫 All board members need to strive to use their influential positions to give visibility to SAA at any event they organize or are invited to, which are related to HIV or STIs, TB, Malaria or health systems in Africa in general

🚫 The ICASA Brand needs to be revamped to ICASA+ (Plus) with the extension of the scope of ICASA to include emerging health issues and diseases e.g.:

- Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs),
- Malaria, TB, Ebola, Lassa Fever, Hepatitis, MPOX, Syphilis,
- and other infectious diseases
- in addition to health systems strengthening in Africa

🚫 In order to mobilize more resources and increase SAA's visibility SAA needs to put in place measures and processes to strengthen the coordination mechanisms for large-scale events apart from ICASA

🚫 There is the need to increase efforts to develop more value-driven services and beneficial opportunities for members to promote membership, engagement and growth

🚫 The need for innovative and attractive packages to attract and retain bilingual and competent staff

AFRICA JOURNAL FOR AIDS AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES (AJAID)

Publish High-Impact HIV & Global Health Research.



 www.ajaid.org

AJAID is a multi-disciplinary academic journal dedicated to advancing evidence-based solutions to HIV, TB, Malaria, and related public health challenges.

THEMATICS AREAS



HIV/AIDS Management

PreP | TaSP | ART Scale-Up | Adherence | Prevention Science



Community Engagement & Empowerment

Key Populations | Stigma Reduction Community-Led Monitoring | PLHIV Wellbeing



Health Systems Strengthening

Integrated Services (HIV/TB/Malaria/Maternal Health) | Workforce Development | Supply Chain | Health Financing



Emerging Issues & Co-infections

TB | Hepatitis | STIs | Integrated Care Models | Infection Prevention



Socio-Economic & Political Determinants

Poverty | Gender Inequality | Policy Environments | Structural Drivers



Research & Innovation

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Mr. Luc Armand H. Bodea,
ICASA Director / SAA Coordinator

Message from ICASA Director

As I address you on behalf of the Secretariat of the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), I do so with a deep sense of pride in how far our organization has come. As we celebrated SAA's 35th anniversary last year, it was an important moment to reflect on the journey of an institution that has remained firmly African-led, while continuously renewing its leadership through free and fair elections every four years. This has provided the organization with both stability and continuity of vision.

Today, SAA is stronger and more established than ever before. Our team has grown from 17 to 24 staff members, while our membership has surpassed 25,000 across Africa and beyond. This growth is underpinned by a clear and robust governance structure comprising the General Assembly, the Administrative Council and the Executive Council, supported by seven functional departments and overseen by the Board of Trustees. Together, these structures provide the foundation we need to deliver fully on our mandate.

At the heart of our work is the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA), our flagship platform and one of the key pillars of SAA's sustainability. Despite a challenging global funding environment, ICASA 2025 in Accra brought together 3,166 delegates, including 958 virtual participants. More than 1,250 people took part in activities at the Community Village, while the conference received 1,864 abstracts

from 87 countries and attracted coverage from 45 media outlets.

The conference also provided a fitting occasion to celebrate SAA's 35th anniversary. These achievements reaffirm ICASA's vitality and continued relevance, as well as its unique role in amplifying Africa's voice on the global health stage.

However, SAA is about much more than a single conference. During this tenure, we implemented the Voice Project across West Africa, maintained a sustained webinar programme with our regional and technical partners, strengthened our collaboration with World Health Organisation (WHO), UN system and other universities, and developed the SAA Strategic Plan 2023–2027 to guide the organization's next phase.

We also introduced several initiatives for the first time. A mentorship programme was established and has contributed measurably to improving the quality of abstracts submitted to ICASA. We also launched a journal to give greater visibility to African research and help strengthen its contribution to global health knowledge.

Our commitment extends beyond conferences and research. Through initiatives such as the Edith Bongo Prize for the best female abstract, blood-donation drives, and the donation of 200 hospital beds during ICASA 2025, we have sought to keep our work closely connected to the communities we serve.

We must, however, remain clear-eyed about the challenges ahead. The decline in donor funding is a reality. At the same time, ICASA registration fees remain heavily subsidized to ensure that our members can participate. If we are to preserve the gains made over the past three decades, Africa must take greater ownership of its response: strengthening domestic health financing, protecting essential services, and building health systems that are self-reliant, sustainable and resilient enough to meet the challenges ahead.

Our mandate has never been about profit. It is about contributing to the end of HIV, strengthening health systems and ensuring that everyone has access to care without discrimination.

To our newly inaugurated Executive Council, our partners and our members across the continent, I extend my heartfelt congratulations and sincere gratitude. The journey continues. Together, we will carry SAA into its next chapter as a stronger, more united and more determined organization than ever before.

Luc Armand H. Bodea

ICASA Director / SAA Coordinator, Society for AIDS in Africa



From left to right: Prof. Robert Soudre (SAA Board of Trustees); Hon. Dr. David Pagwesese Parirenyatwa (Outgoing President); Dr. Meskerem Bekele-Grunitzky (SAA Board of Trustees); and Prof. Sheila Dinotshe Tlou (SAA Board of Trustees),

Board of Trustees / Directors

The Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) Board of Trustees stood at the center of the organization's 2026 leadership transition, safeguarding a process that was orderly, transparent, and fully compliant with the SAA's Constitution. The Board comprises **Prof. Robert Soudre** (Burkina Faso) SAA President (2011 - 2014); **Dr. Meskerem Bekele-Grunitzky** (Ethiopia), SAA Board Member 2011 – 2014; and **Prof. Sheila Dinotshe Tlou** (Botswana), SAA General-Secretary 2011 - 2014. These three distinguished figures have made significant contributions to Africa's public health and governance landscape with a combined expertise spanning decades of service to the continent's health systems.

The trustees were mandated to supervise the SAA Executive Board election held on **13 May 2026** at the Accra City Hotel, Ghana, and the subsequent handover ceremony on **14 May 2026** at the Mövenpick Ambassador Hotel, Accra. Both events were successfully conducted under their leadership, providing the incoming and outgoing boards with an impartial guarantee of due process.

SERVING AS THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Acting in their capacity as the Electoral Commission for the exercise, the trustees oversaw a secret-ballot process conducted both in person and online. **Prof. Robert Soudre** served as Chair of the Electoral Commission, **Dr. Meskerem Bekele-Grunitzky** as Secretary, and **Prof. Sheila Dinotshe Tlou** as Deputy Secretary. The Commission

registered five in-person voters, two online voters, and no proxy votes across six contested positions. It confirmed that the election was conducted in full accordance with Articles 10.1 – 10.2 and Article 12 of the SAA Constitution. No complaint was registered, and the election was therefore declared free, fair, and credible.

ENSURING INSTITUTIONAL CONTINUITY

At the close of the transition, the Board of Trustees formally validated the newly elected Governing Board and Executive Board. To preserve institutional memory and ensure experienced counsel for the new leadership, the trustees nominated the outgoing SAA President, **Dr. David Pagwesese Parirenyatwa** (Zimbabwe), as a new member of the Board of Trustees. In the same spirit of honouring the Society's legacy, past SAA Executive Board members underscored SAA's commitment to drawing on the wisdom and experience of its founders as it charts the path ahead.

Board of Trustees / Directors



Prof. Robert Soudre
Burkina Faso



Dr. Meskerem Grunitzky
Ethiopia



Prof. Sheila Tlou
Botswana



Dr. Ihab Ahmed
Egypt



Hon. Dr. David Pagwesese Parirenyatwa
Zimbabwe



SAA Executive Board members during the closing of the 33rd Session of SAA board meeting at Movenpick Ambassador Hotel, Accra, Ghana

SAA Executive Board Handover

8TH EXECUTIVE BOARD HANDOVER CEREMONY

The Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) convened its **8th Executive Board Handover Ceremony** from **13 to 14 May 2026** at the Mövenpick Ambassador Hotel in Accra, Ghana. Held alongside the closing of the **33rd Session of the SAA Board**, the two-day gathering marked an important milestone in the Society's leadership transition and reaffirmed its continued commitment to strengthening Africa's response to HIV, tuberculosis, hepatitis, and other emerging infectious diseases.

The event brought together distinguished public health leaders, researchers, policymakers, advocates, civil society representatives, and partners from across the continent. Beyond providing an opportunity to reflect on the Society's achievements, the gathering offered a forward-looking platform to identify priorities and shape the agenda for the new leadership's term.

REFLECTING ON EIGHT YEARS OF PROGRESS

Outgoing President Dr. David Pagwesese Parirenyatwa reflected on the achievements of his eight-year tenure at the helm of SAA. Under his leadership, the Society successfully organised two editions of ICASA, Africa's largest conference on HIV and public health. His tenure also saw the launch of the African Journal on AIDS and Infectious Diseases

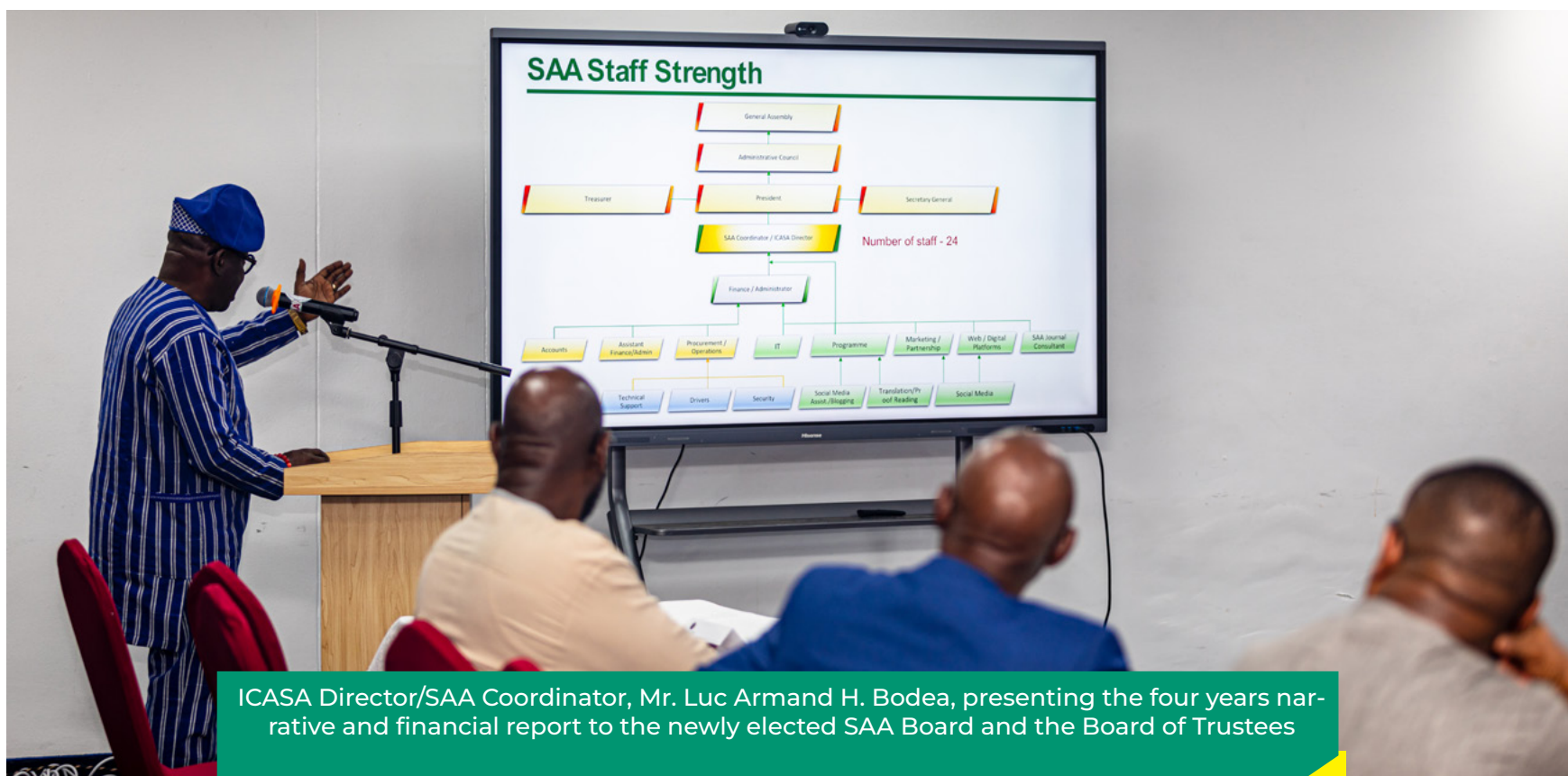
(AJAID), the development of capacity-building tools for health professionals across the continent, increased visibility through webinars and digital engagement, and the strengthening of the Permanent Secretariat's workforce.

In his remarks, Dr. Parirenyatwa called on the new Board to maintain the Society's current headquarters, review its bylaws, and strengthen its communication strategies to better highlight SAA's extensive work beyond the ICASA conferences. He also urged the incoming leadership to raise greater awareness of the Society's programmes, initiatives, and achievements outside ICASA, so that the full scope of SAA's contribution to Africa's public health response is more widely recognised.

A CANDID FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The financial presentation delivered during the ceremony provided a candid assessment of the financial pressures faced by the Society in recent years. Funding had declined significantly compared with previous periods, largely because of the COVID-19 pandemic and a tightening global financing environment. Over the same period, ICASA conference attendance fell from approximately 8,000 to 3,000 participants. Despite these challenges, management highlighted the Society's resilience and its ability to sustain operations throughout this difficult period.

In response to questions from Board members regarding income diversification and audit processes, it was confirmed that independent audits are conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) for ICASA and Cadmon Chartered Accountants for SAA. These measures reinforce the Society's commitment to sound financial management,



transparency, and accountability.

ICASA Director and SAA Coordinator, Mr. Luc Armand H. Bodea, presented the four-year Narrative and Financial Report, together with the SAA Budget and Expenditure Report covering the period 1989–2025, to the newly elected Board members and the Board of Trustees. He expressed the Organization's sincere appreciation to the Board for its commitment, support, and unwavering encouragement, as well as to the staff of the ICASA and SAA Permanent Secretariats for their dedication and contributions. He noted that the Board's continued support had enabled the Organization to operate in a conducive working environment and had contributed significantly to its achievements over the years.

STRATEGIC REVIEW AND BOARD GOVERNANCE ORIENTATION

Margaret Owusu-Amoako presented a review of the implementation of SAA's five-year Strategic Plan, highlighting substantial progress in key areas, including successful resource mobilisation, expanded partnerships, and the completion of conferences and activities that exceeded their initial targets.

The newly appointed Board members also participated in a comprehensive governance orientation led by **Dr. Casely Ato Coleman**, a consultant with three decades of experience in international development. The session explored the integration of digital ecosystems into corporate governance, the four key management flows_ people, performance, work, and information_ and the importance of aligning each Board member's role with SAA's core values. It also addressed ethics management, risk assessment, compliance, and conflict management, drawing on the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument and Lencioni's Five Dysfunctions of a Team. The orientation provided the incoming Board with a practical framework for strengthening collective leadership and effective governance.

Hon. Prof. Smaila Ouedraogo, a public health consultant, also delivered a presentation titled "Reflections on SAA's Partnership with African Governments to Strengthen Health Systems in Africa." His presentation highlighted the critical juncture facing Africa's HIV response and underscored the urgent need for greater domestic ownership and sustainable financing.

Prof. Ouedraogo noted that **25.9 million** people are living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. While treatment coverage has improved, the region remains below the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets, at approximately **88%-77%-73%**. He further highlighted the continued dependence of many countries on external financing, particularly from PEPFAR and the Global Fund, which together account for an estimated **70–95%** of HIV financing in some countries.

This vulnerability was further exposed by the 2025 "**PEPFAR Shock**," which, according to the presentation, included the suspension of more than US\$500 million in US assistance, a 30% shortfall in Global Fund financing, and disruptions to health services across more

than 20 countries, placing more than 500,000 people at risk.

The presentation identified three major barriers to increased domestic financing: structural barriers, including debt burdens and weak tax systems; political barriers, including the low prioritisation of health and limited engagement by finance ministries; and technical barriers, including weak data systems and poor coordination. **Prof. Ouedraogo** noted that only two of Africa's 54 countries currently meet the Abuja Declaration target of allocating **15%** of national budgets to health.

At the same time, he emphasised the strong economic case for investment in HIV prevention and health systems. According to the figures presented, every US\$1 invested in prevention can generate a return of approximately US\$6, while failure to act could result in economic losses estimated at **US\$58 billion**.

Examples from across the continent illustrated the importance of political commitment and domestic ownership. Rwanda and Botswana were highlighted as examples of strong political leadership and national ownership, while Nigeria illustrated the risks associated with heavy dependence on external assistance, particularly in the context of disruptions to HIV treatment during the PEPFAR funding pause.

In response to these challenges, SAA proposed a five-pillar advocacy model centred on: economic argumentation; high-level political engagement; the development of a champions network; stronger regional coordination; and innovative financing mechanisms, including tobacco and telecommunications levies, trust funds, and diaspora bonds. Through this approach, SAA seeks to position itself as a scientific authority, advocacy platform, and coalition-builder in support of stronger and more sustainable health systems across Africa.

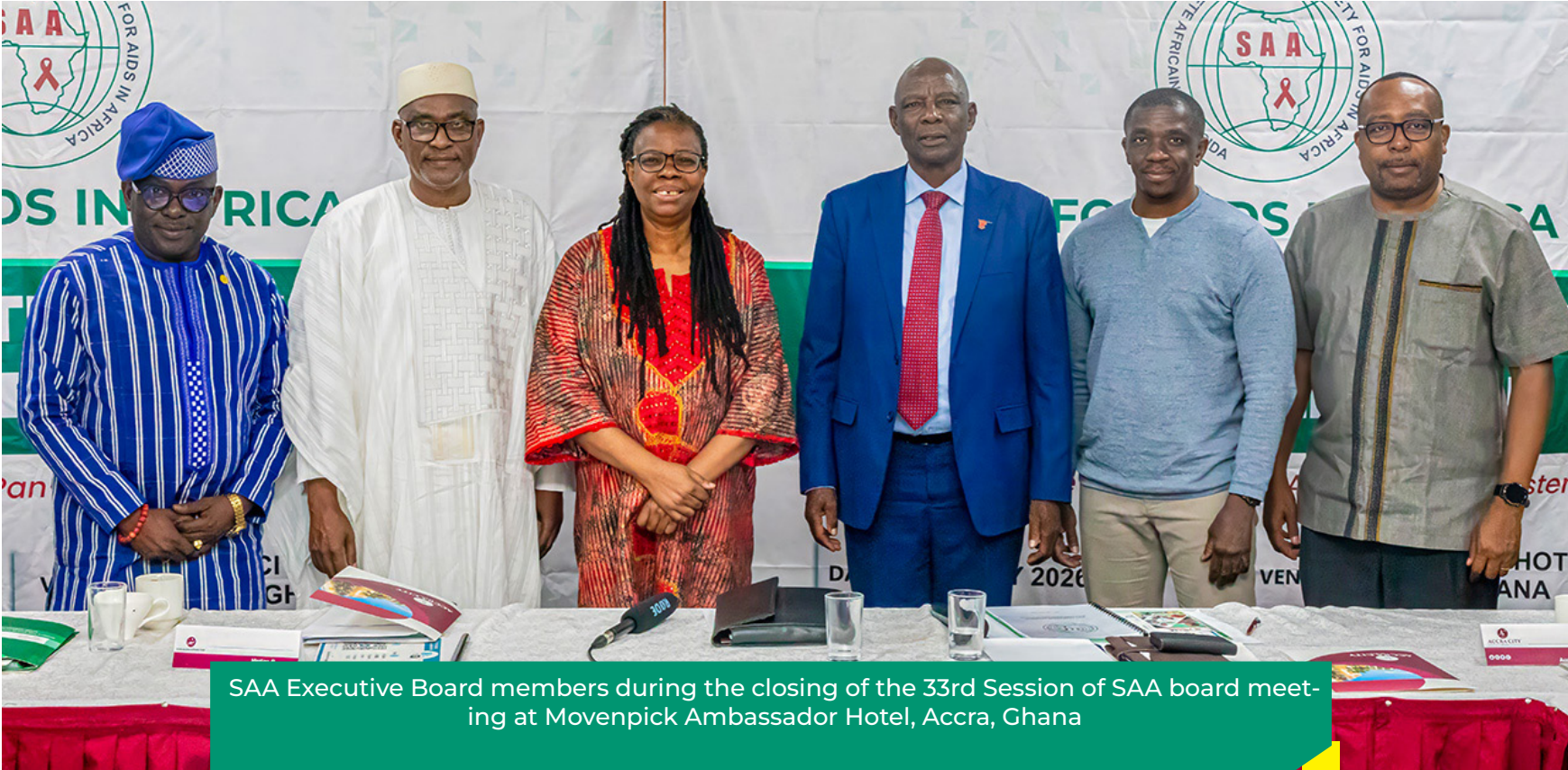
The presentation called on African governments to work towards the 15% health-budget target, establish HIV trust funds, increase domestic HIV financing to **40% by 2027–2028**, and strengthen accountability through an annual scorecard tracking national commitments and progress.

A NEW PRESIDENT ACCEPTS THE MANDATE

Accepting the presidency with humility, **Dr. Nchabi Richard Kamwi** pledged to work closely with the Board to advance SAA's mission of eliminating HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria across the continent. He expressed his appreciation to the outgoing President, fellow Board members, former Presidents, and the Secretariat for their contributions and support, setting a collaborative and forward-looking tone for the **2026–2029 term**.

As the new leadership assumed its responsibilities, Board members were invited to sign the **Board Pledge** and review the **Conflict-of-Interest Policy**. They also prepared to engage in subsequent discussions on resource mobilisation and sustainable funding strategies, reflecting the Board's commitment to strengthening SAA's institutional and financial sustainability.





SAA Executive Board members during the closing of the 33rd Session of SAA board meeting at Movenpick Ambassador Hotel, Accra, Ghana

SAA Governing Council 2026-2029

The newly constituted **SAA Governing Council for the 2026–2029** term brings together eight distinguished leaders drawn from across the continent, combining clinical, scientific, policy, and advocacy expertise. Their election follows regional elections conducted electronically for the Eastern, Central, Southern, Northern, and Western African regions from **18 to 29 August 2025**, completed through a combination of in-person and online secret ballots on **13 May 2026** at the **Accra City Hotel, Ghana**.

The Electoral Commission — chaired by **Prof. Robert Soudre** and comprising **Dr. Meskerem Bekele-Grunitzky** and **Prof. Sheila Dinotshe Tlou** declared the process free, fair, and credible, with no complaints registered. The Governing Board comprises:

NO.:	FULL NAME	NATIONALITY
1.	Prof. Mohamed Chakroun	Tunisian
2.	Dr. Aliou Sylla	Malian
3.	Prof. Morenike Ukpong	Nigerian
4	Dr. Benjamin Djoudalbaye	Chadian

5.	Dr. Avelin F. Aghokeng	Cameroonian
6.	Hon. Dr. Nchabi Richard Kamwi	Namibian
7.	Prof. Jeanine Condo	Rwandan
8.	Florence Riako Anam	Kenyan

Both in-person and online voting were used to elect the six available Executive positions, with five members casting their ballots in person and two voting online. No proxy votes were cast. With no complaints registered, the Board of Trustees declared the process free, fair, and credible before formally proclaiming the results below.

POSITION	ELECTED NOMINEE	COUNTRY	VOTES CAST
President	Dr. Nchabi Richard Kamwi	Namibia	6 of 7
Vice President	Prof. Mohamed Chakroun	Tunisia	7 of 7
Secretary-General	Prof. Jeanie Condo	Rwanda	7 of 7
Deputy Secretary-General	Dr. Avelin F. Aghokeng	Cameroon	7 of 7
Treasurer	Dr. Aliou Sylla	Mali	7 of 7
Deputy Treasurer	Florence Riako Anam	Kenya	7 of 7

During the transition meeting, the **Governing Council, as validated by the Board of Trustees**, confirmed the new Executive Board that will oversee the SAA's day-to-day operations and strategic direction. The six elected officers received strong support, with five of the six positions decided by unanimous vote (**7 of 7 votes**), while the Presidency was secured with **6 of 7 votes**.

The Board of Trustees also nominated the outgoing SAA President, **Dr. David Pagwesese Parirenyatwa** (Zimbabwe), as a new member of the Board of Trustees, ensuring that his eight years of institutional knowledge and leadership experience will continue to benefit the Organization. Guided by its mandate under the SAA Constitution and a clear strategic agenda, the new Governing Council takes office with a commitment to sustaining Africa's scientific leadership, deepening partnerships, promoting sustainable domestic investment in health, advancing scientific excellence through **ICASA** and the

African Journal on AIDS and Infectious Diseases (AJAID), and contributing to the continent's collective effort to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.



SAA GOVERNING COUNCIL

(2026 - 2029)



Dr. Nchabi Richard Kamwi
President, Namibia



Prof. Mohamed Chakroun
Vice President, Tunisia



Prof. Jeanine Condo
Secretary General, Rwanda



Dr. Avelin F. Aghokeng
*Deputy Secretary General,
Cameroon*



Dr. Aliou Sylla
Treasurer, Mali



Florence Riako Anam
Deputy Treasurer, Kenya



Prof. Morenike O. Ukpong
Member, Nigeria



Dr. Djoudalbaye Benjamin
Member, Chad



From left to right: Prof. Sheila Tlou, Member of the SAA Board of Trustees; Hon. Dr. David Pagwesese Parirenyatwa, Outgoing SAA President (explaining the significance of the SAA Stamp before handing it over to the President-elect); Hon. Dr. Richard Nchabi Kamwi, Incoming SAA President; and Mr. Luc Armand H. Bodea, ICASA Director/SAA Coordinator

Handing Over Ceremony

On the afternoon of **14 May 2026**, delegates gathered at the Mövenpick Ambassador Hotel in Accra for the formal proceedings of the **SAA's 8th Executive Board Handover Ceremony**. **Prof. Sheila Dinotshe Tlou**, Member of the SAA Board of Trustees, served as Mistress of Ceremonies and welcomed outgoing President **Dr. David Pagwesese Parirenyatwa**, incoming President **Dr. Nchabi Richard Kamwi**, fellow Trustees, former Board members, representatives of the Government of Ghana and the Ghana AIDS Commission, the World Health Organization Country Office for Ghana, and staff of the SAA and ICASA Secretariats.

Reflecting on the two eventful days at the Mövenpick, which had begun with the SAA Board elections and continued with a Board orientation retreat focused on governance and digital transformation, Prof. Tlou formally opened the ceremony, welcoming what she described as “a new Board, a new everything.”

The proceedings also featured warm messages of solidarity from SAA's institutional partners. On behalf of the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, **Dr. Fiona Braka**, WHO Country Representative for Ghana, congratulated the incoming leadership, describing the handover as a pivotal moment for “**one of Africa's most respected public health societies.**” She reaffirmed WHO's commitment to supporting integrated, people-centred responses to HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, and non-communicable diseases across the continent.

The **Ghana AIDS Commission** likewise extended its congratulations, recalling the two institutions' close collaboration in delivering **ICASA 2025 in Accra** and welcoming the incoming Executive Board as SAA looks ahead to **ICASA 2027** and the continent's

shared goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

A SYMBOLIC TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY

The centerpiece of the ceremony was the formal handing over of the SAA Stamp. The symbol of presidential authority from the outgoing President Dr. David Pagwesese Parirenyatwa to incoming President Dr. Richard Nchabi Kamwi. Before transferring the emblem, Dr. Parirenyatwa explained its significance to the assembled delegates, underscoring the weight of responsibility it represents and the continuity of purpose it embodies. The moment was witnessed by the Board of Trustees, incoming board members, the Secretariat, and invited guests, making it a powerful affirmation of SAA's democratic traditions.

THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S REFLECTIONS

Dr. Parirenyatwa used the occasion to reflect on eight years of leadership, and the milestones achieved under his stewardship. He highlighted the successful organization of two ICASA conferences, the launch of the African Journal on AIDS and Infectious Diseases (AJAID), the development of capacity-building tools for health professionals, and the strengthening of the Permanent Secretariat's workforce. He also spoke candidly about the challenges the organization navigated, including the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant decline in conference attendance from approximately 8,000 to 3,000 participants, and the tightening of the global financing environment.

He also encouraged the new Board to develop innovative staff-retention packages and value-driven membership services to attract new members through SAA's membership platform.

THE INCOMING PRESIDENT'S COMMITMENT

Accepting the presidency with humility, Dr. Richard Nchabi Kamwi pledged to work closely with the Board, the Secretariat, and partners across the continent to advance SAA's mission of eliminating HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria in Africa. He expressed heartfelt gratitude to the outgoing President for his years of service, to the Board of Trustees for overseeing a credible election, and to the former presidents and Secretariat staff for their steadfast support. His remarks set a collaborative and forward-looking tone for the 2026–2029 term, signaling a leadership that intends to build on the foundations laid while pursuing bold new ambitions.

LOOKING AHEAD

The handover ceremony concluded with a clear mandate for the incoming leadership. Board members were called upon to sign the Board Pledge, review the conflict-of-interest policy, and prepare for substantive discussions on resource mobilization and funding strategies. With a renewed leadership, a robust governance framework, and

a firm commitment to its founding mission, SAA enters the 2026–2029 term poised to deepen partnerships, sustain Africa's scientific leadership, promote sustainable domestic investment in health, and support the continent's collective effort to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.







Hon. Dr. David Pagwesese Parirenyatwa – Out going SAA President (2022 – 2025)

Keynote address from outgoing SAA President

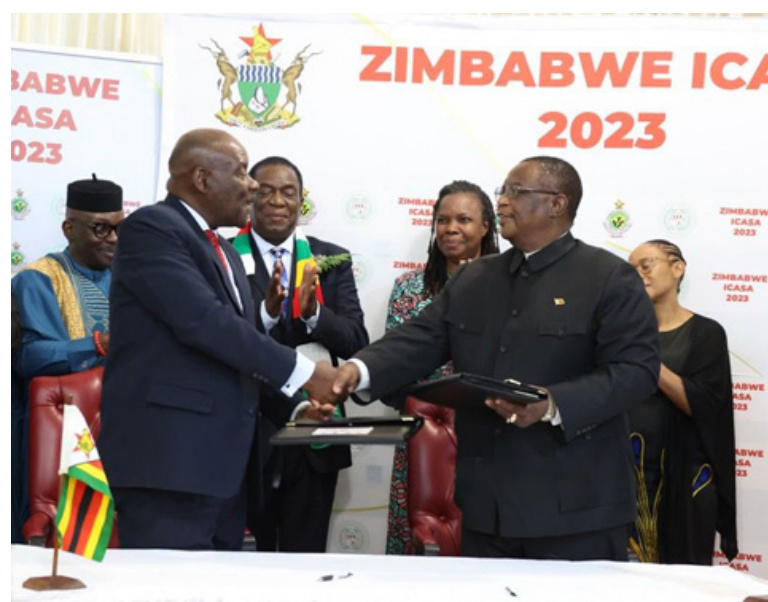
In his farewell address, the outgoing President of the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) reflected on eight years of service to the Society, four as Vice President and four as President, and officially handed over leadership to the newly elected Executive Board. He described the occasion as a significant milestone that underscored SAA's commitment to good governance, accountability and transparency.

The outgoing President paid tribute to SAA's founding leaders, trustees and Board members for their unwavering dedication to the Society, acknowledging their collective role in safeguarding and strengthening the institution over the years. He expressed appreciation for the support of the Executive Board and the Permanent Secretariat, noting that the achievements recorded during his tenure were the result of a shared commitment to advancing SAA's mission.

Reflecting on the Society's accomplishments, he highlighted the successful organization of two editions of ICASA despite a challenging global environment, the expansion of SAA's visibility through strategic partnerships and webinars, the development of capacity-building initiatives for young scientists, the strengthening of the Permanent Secretariat, continued efforts to grow the Society's membership, and the launch of the African Journal on AIDS and Infectious Diseases (AJAID). He emphasized that these achievements, guided by the SAA Strategic Plan 2023–2027, have provided a strong foundation upon which the incoming Board can continue to build.

The outgoing President also acknowledged challenges encountered during his tenure, particularly the inability to realize the long-standing vision of constructing a new SAA headquarters due to funding constraints and difficulties in acquiring suitable land. He encouraged the incoming Board to carefully consider the future of the Society's headquarters, including maintaining or redeveloping the existing property or acquiring a new facility if relocation becomes necessary.

Concluding his address, he encouraged the new leadership to review the Society's bylaws to ensure they remain responsive to emerging trends and continue to strengthen SAA's institutional framework. He expressed confidence in the incoming Board and called on all members to uphold the spirit of Pan-Africanism while working together to advance stronger health systems across Africa.





Hon. Dr. Nchabi Richard Kamwi, SAA President (2026 – 2029),
14 May 2026, Movenpick Ambassador Hotel Accra, Ghana

Dr. Nchabi Richard Kamwi Sworn In as SAA President for 2026–2029

In his inaugural address, the newly elected President of the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) expressed his profound gratitude for the confidence placed in him and reaffirmed his commitment to advancing the Society's mission at a pivotal moment in Africa's response to HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, hepatitis, emerging infectious diseases and broader public health challenges. He described the leadership transition as a continuation of SAA's enduring legacy of scientific excellence, advocacy and continental solidarity.

Paying tribute to the outgoing President, Hon. Dr. David Parirenyatwa, he commended his visionary leadership and significant contributions to strengthening SAA's role as Africa's leading platform for scientific exchange, advocacy and collaboration. He acknowledged that the progress achieved under the outgoing Board provides a strong foundation for the Society's future growth.

Looking ahead, the President reaffirmed his commitment to the implementation of the SAA Strategic Plan 2023–2027, emphasizing that it will remain the Society's guiding framework for advancing Africa's public health agenda. Working closely with the Executive Board, the SAA Secretariat and the ICASA Director and SAA Coordinator,

Mr. Luc Armand Bodea, he pledged to accelerate progress in key strategic areas, including advocacy leadership, strategic partnerships, institutional sustainability, youth engagement and community-centered health programming.

He also outlined his vision to strengthen SAA's digital presence as a platform for advocacy, collaboration and knowledge sharing while promoting universal health coverage, research and development, vaccine production, pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, and equitable access to life-saving technologies. Stressing that Africa must become a global leader in health innovation, he called for increased investment in African-led research, stronger regulatory systems, expanded local manufacturing capacity and sustained scientific collaboration across the continent.

Recognizing the changing global financing landscape, the President underscored the importance of domestic resource mobilization and greater African ownership of the continent's health response. He affirmed that SAA would continue to engage governments, the African Union, the private sector, development finance institutions and regional economic communities to mobilize sustainable resources for HIV programmes, health systems strengthening, research, prevention, treatment and community-led interventions in support of global and continental health commitments.

The President further emphasized that resilient health systems remain the cornerstone



of Africa's health security. He reiterated the Society's commitment to strengthening healthcare infrastructure, the health workforce, laboratory and surveillance systems, supply chains, community health networks and digital health innovation, while ensuring

that the voices of young people, women, vulnerable populations, researchers, civil society organizations and frontline communities remain central to policy development and programme implementation.

Concluding his address, the President expressed confidence that, through unity, innovation, courage and solidarity, Africa can shape its own health future. He reaffirmed SAA's commitment to strengthening the continent's collective voice in global health, fostering strategic partnerships, and driving progress towards a healthier, more equitable and disease-free Africa, while inviting members and partners to reconvene at ICASA 2027.

During the handover ceremony, the newly elected members of the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) Executive Board formally pledged to uphold the highest standards of governance, integrity and accountability in the discharge of their responsibilities. In accepting their mandate, they reaffirmed their commitment to advancing the Society's mission and serving the best interests of SAA and the African continent.

The Board members pledged to carry out their fiduciary duties with diligence, loyalty and professionalism, recognizing that their primary responsibility is to provide strategic leadership, strengthen institutional governance, mobilize resources and support the effective implementation of the Society's mission in accordance with the SAA Bylaws. They also acknowledged the distinct roles of the Executive Board and the Secretariat, affirming their commitment to providing policy direction while respecting the Secretariat's responsibility for operational management.

In their pledge, the Board members committed to active participation in Board and committee meetings, maintaining confidentiality, promoting transparency, declaring and managing conflicts of interest, fostering collegiality and mutual respect, supporting collective decisions of the Executive Board, and always representing SAA with professionalism and integrity. They further committed to continuous learning and active participation in strategic planning and institutional development initiatives to strengthen the Society's effectiveness.

The Board also reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining a safe, respectful and inclusive environment by upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct and rejecting all forms of harassment, misconduct and inappropriate behavior. In accepting these responsibilities, the members pledged to uphold the principles and values of the Society and acknowledged that, should they be unable to fulfill these commitments, they would relinquish their positions in the best interests of the organization.

GOODWILL MESSAGE FROM WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)



Dr. Fiona Braka, WHO Representative in Ghana, delivering a goodwill message

In her goodwill message, Dr. Braka congratulated the newly elected leadership of the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) and expressed appreciation to the outgoing leadership, Governing Council and Secretariat for their dedicated service and stewardship.

Representing the World Health Organization (WHO), she highlighted the historic role of SAA as an African-led platform for policy dialogue, advocacy, accountability and scientific engagement for more than three decades. She recognized the Society's continued contribution to evidence-based responses to HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and emerging infectious diseases, grounded in human rights, equity and solidarity.

She paid tribute to the outgoing President and leadership for guiding the Society through a challenging global health environment marked by evolving epidemics, declining external financing and pressures on health systems, while maintaining Africa's voice and leadership in global health discussions.

Addressing the incoming leadership, she emphasized the need for renewed ambition and transformation to accelerate progress towards ending AIDS and strengthening resilient, integrated health systems across the continent. She highlighted key priorities, including integrated health services, stronger primary healthcare systems, digital transformation, community engagement, and sustainable domestic financing for health.

She reaffirmed WHO's continued commitment to working alongside SAA, supporting scientific evidence generation, capacity building, advocacy for equity and human

rights, and platforms such as ICASA that promote African leadership and innovation in global health.

Concluding her remarks, she commended SAA for upholding strong governance traditions and expressed confidence in continued collaboration towards a healthier, more equitable future for Africa.

GOODWILL MESSAGE FROM GHANA AIDS COMMISSION (GAC)



Dr. Kharmacelle Prosper Akabong, the Director-General of the Ghana AIDS Commission delivering a goodwill message

In his goodwill message, Dr. Akabong congratulated the newly elected leadership of the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) and expressed appreciation to the outgoing Executive Board for its dedicated service and contribution to advancing the Society's mission.

He highlighted the successful organization of the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA 2025) as a major milestone achieved through strong collaboration, technical guidance and shared commitment between SAA, the Ghana AIDS Commission and all stakeholders involved. He recognized the outgoing leadership's support in enabling effective coordination, stakeholder engagement and the successful delivery of a landmark conference.

Addressing the incoming Executive Board, he emphasized the importance of continued evidence-based leadership, strategic direction and commitment to strengthening SAA's continental impact. He encouraged the new leadership to build on the achievements of previous ICASA editions and ensure the continued success of future conferences,

including ICASA 2027.

He reaffirmed the Ghana AIDS Commission's commitment to strengthening collaboration with SAA through three key areas: advancing strategic research aligned with continental priorities; translating evidence into policies, programmes and interventions; and promoting sustainable approaches that ensure long-term impact.

Concluding his remarks, he expressed appreciation to the outgoing leadership for its contribution to Ghana during ICASA 2025 and welcomed the incoming Board, reaffirming his commitment to continued partnership towards the shared goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.



ICASA 2027 CONFERENCE KEY DATES

KEY DATE	OPEN	CLOSE
Call for ICASA 2027 logo	1st August 2026	25th September 2026
Call for ICASA 2027 Thematics	1st August 2026	25th September 2026
1st ISC meeting	23 rd November 2026	24 th November 2026
Call for Abstract	1st March 2027	31st May 2027, 24.00 ^{GMT}
Early Registration	1st March 2027	31st May 2027, 24.00 ^{GMT}
2nd ISC meeting	29th March 2027	1st April 2027
Call for Abstract reviewers	3rd February 2027	31st May 2027
Regular Registration	1st June 2027	31st August 2027, 24.00 ^{GMT}
Exhibition Booking	1st March 2027	31st August 2027, 24.00 ^{GMT}
Satellite Session Booking	1st March 2027	31st August 2027, 24.00 ^{GMT}
Late Registration	1st September 2027	31st October 2027, 24.00 ^{GMT}
Scholarship Application	1st July 2027	31st July 2027
Reviewing of Abstracts	1st July 2027	6th August 2027
Feedback from speakers	31st May 2027	15th June 2027
Marathon Meeting	18th August 2027	21 st August 2027
Notice of Acceptance, Abstract	25th August 2027	30th August 2027
Announcement of Recipient Scholarship	30 th August 2027	1 st September 2027
ICASA 2027 Online Programme	15 th September 2027	
ICASA 2027 Conference Date	5 th December 2027	9 th December 2027

Key messages from Board Members to Constituents

VISION STATEMENT OF THE SAA PRESIDENT, HON. DR. RICHARD NCHABI KAMWI

Reflecting on the Society for AIDS in Africa's (SAA) 35-year legacy, the President reaffirmed his commitment to building on the Society's proud history while advancing its role as Africa's leading pan-African platform for researchers, implementers, civil society organizations and public health leaders. He emphasized that continued unity, collaboration and dedication

will remain central to achieving SAA's mission.

The President reiterated his commitment to supporting innovation and the development of effective solutions to HIV, AIDS and the broader public health challenges facing Africa. He underscored the importance of ensuring that SAA remains responsive to the continent's evolving health priorities through the continued implementation of its strategic vision and the ongoing review of its Constitution to reflect an increasingly dynamic global health environment.

Recognizing the changing public health landscape, he emphasized the need for SAA to broaden its focus beyond HIV to encompass emerging health and development challenges affecting individuals, families and communities across Africa. He also highlighted the importance of advancing science, innovation, knowledge management and the application of emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), to strengthen research, data analysis and evidence-informed decision-making. He noted that these priorities will continue to shape both the Society's programmes and its flagship initiative, the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA).

The President further reaffirmed his commitment to strengthening the Society's institutional relevance, sustainability and long-term resource mobilization through enhanced partnerships and stakeholder engagement. He emphasized that strong governance, effective communication, accountability and transparency will remain fundamental principles guiding SAA's work and relationships with its members, partners



Hon. Dr. Nchabi Richard Kamwi,
SAA President

and supporters.

Concluding his message, the President expressed his sincere appreciation to the Society's members, funders, partners and Board members for their continued commitment and dedicated service. He pledged to lead with humility and collaboration while working closely with all stakeholders to advance the Society's vision and impact across the continent.



**Prof. Mohamed Chakroun,
SAA Vice President**

VISION STATEMENT OF THE SAA VICE-PRESIDENT, PROF. MOHAMED CHAKROUN

In his vision statement, Prof. Mohamed Chakroun, Vice President of the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), expressed his sincere appreciation to members for renewing their confidence in him for a second term. He described their trust as both an honor and a responsibility, reaffirming his commitment to

serving the Society with integrity, dedication and diligence.

Prof. Chakroun pledged to support and strengthen Africa's response to HIV and other communicable diseases by advancing SAA's scientific, academic and programmatic activities. He emphasized the importance of fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing and capacity building as key pillars of the Society's work across the continent.

Looking ahead, he identified his priorities for the new term as strengthening partnerships with African and international scientific societies, institutions and public health organizations; supporting the successful establishment of the African Journal on AIDS and Infectious Diseases (AJAID) as a trusted platform for scientific exchange; and enhancing the scientific quality, visibility and impact of the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) through rigorous scientific programming and broader expert engagement.

Concluding his remarks, Prof. Chakroun reaffirmed his commitment to working closely with the Executive Board to promote teamwork, mutual trust and institutional excellence, while supporting the continued growth, visibility and success of the Society for AIDS in Africa.

VISION STATEMENT OF THE SAA SECRETARY-GENERAL, PROF. JEANINE CONDO

In presenting her vision for the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), the newly appointed Secretary-General reaffirmed her commitment to advancing the Society as a stronger, scientifically driven and authentically African institution that places African leadership, evidence and communities at the center of the global HIV response.

A portrait of Prof. Jeanine Condo, a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a patterned blue and green top. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

Prof. Jeanine Condo,
SAA Secretary-General

Recognizing Africa's central role in the global HIV response, she emphasized the importance of strengthening African ownership of solutions and ensuring that the continent is not only a recipient of externally driven health agendas, but also a leader in shaping its own scientific, policy and public health priorities. She expressed her commitment to working closely with the SAA Board, Secretariat and partners to advance this vision.

The Secretary-General brings more than two decades of experience in public health leadership, research and institutional development. Her professional background includes senior leadership roles within Rwanda's health and academic institutions, as well as her current work as founder and chief executive of public health and innovation initiatives. She has contributed extensively to scientific research through more than 80 peer-reviewed publications, led international research collaborations supported by global partners, and played a leadership role in major scientific conferences.

Looking ahead, she outlined her vision for SAA to become Africa's most trusted platform for HIV science, policy advocacy and community engagement_ not only through ICASA, but also as a year-round institution. She committed to supporting the successful organization of ICASA 2027 in Benin as a scientifically rigorous and inclusive conference, while strengthening SAA's continuous engagement through scientific working groups, policy briefs, regional dialogues and a more sustainable Secretariat.

Prof. Jeanine Condo identified key priorities for her tenure, including scientific institutional strengthening and governance excellence, African-led research and clinical trials, digital health and data innovation, equity and community-centered responses, and investment in youth and future generations of health leaders. These priorities reflect her conviction that Africa must continue to lead and shape its own health future.



Dr. Avelin F. Aghokeng,
SAA Deputy Secretary-General

VISION STATEMENT OF THE SAA DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL, DR. AVELIN F. AGHOKENG

In outlining his vision as a member of the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) Board, Dr. Avelin F. AGHOKENG expressed his honour in contributing to the Society's mission of ending AIDS and strengthening the prevention and control of infectious diseases across Africa.

He reaffirmed his commitment to advancing SAA as a leading African scientific and advocacy platform that promotes evidence-based responses to HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. His vision includes strengthening the Society's role in supporting high-quality research, translating scientific evidence into policy and practice, and fostering strategic partnerships that contribute to Africa's health security. He also emphasized the importance of positioning the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) as a globally recognized scientific platform that showcases African research, innovation and leadership while promoting collaboration and knowledge exchange among scientists, researchers and health practitioners.

Drawing on his scientific expertise and professional networks, including collaborations with research institutions, global health organizations and public health partners, he highlighted the importance of strengthening engagement among researchers, academic institutions, healthcare professionals, policymakers, development partners and affected communities. He emphasized that sustainable progress requires strong collaboration between science, policy and communities, while encouraging greater participation of young African scientists in shaping health priorities and developing innovative solutions.

His priorities for the term include:

- advancing scientific excellence through high-quality research, innovation and evidence-informed decision-making;
- strengthening the next generation of African scientific leaders through mentorship, training and career development opportunities;
- expanding research capacity through partnerships with universities, research institutions and regional networks;
- enhancing ICASA's scientific impact by increasing opportunities for young investigators to present, publish and engage with leading experts;
- advocating for greater investment in African-led research and sustainable funding for scientific capacity development;
- and promoting knowledge sharing and collaboration to address HIV/AIDS, emerging

infectious diseases and broader public health challenges.



Dr. Aliou Sylla,
SAA Treasurer

VISION STATEMENT OF THE SAA TREASURER, DR ALIOU SYLLA

In presenting his vision as Treasurer of the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), Dr. Sylla highlighted the Society's more than three decades of contribution to Africa's HIV response through scientific engagement, expert networks and the organization of the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA). He emphasized SAA's role in advancing knowledge, fostering dialogue among stakeholders and amplifying Africa's voice on major public health priorities.

Recognizing the rapidly evolving global health landscape, he noted that while HIV remains a major challenge, it is increasingly interconnected with other pressing issues, including tuberculosis, malaria, emerging health threats, climate-related health impacts, pandemic preparedness and changing global health financing mechanisms. In this context, he stressed the importance of consolidating and leveraging SAA's scientific, human and institutional assets to strengthen its future impact.

His vision is built around three key priorities: consolidating SAA's achievements, strengthening connections across its networks and preparing the organization for the future. He emphasized the need to continue reinforcing SAA as a credible, independent and valuable scientific society for governments, researchers, health professionals and communities, while ensuring strong governance, visibility and institutional sustainability.

Highlighting the importance of collaboration, he underscored the value of SAA's diverse network and expressed his commitment to promoting greater exchange between regions, facilitating knowledge sharing and best practices, developing communities of practice, and strengthening the engagement of young researchers, community actors and the African diaspora.

Looking ahead, he emphasized the importance of investing in skills development and knowledge generation through continuous capacity-building initiatives, including virtual learning platforms, regular webinars, mentorship programmes and scientific exchange opportunities. He also highlighted the need to support African research, nurture emerging scientific talent and encourage stronger scientific collaborations across the continent.

He further emphasized SAA's potential contribution to Africa's health sovereignty by promoting evidence-based approaches, supporting African research capacity, contributing to pandemic preparedness discussions and strengthening dialogue between scientific communities, policymakers and partners. He also highlighted the importance of ensuring the Society's long-term sustainability through diversified resource mobilization, including domestic financing, partnerships with African philanthropy, responsible private-sector engagement and the mobilization of diaspora

expertise and networks.

Concluding his vision statement, Dr. Sylla reaffirmed the importance of strengthening SAA's scientific presence throughout the year beyond ICASA through webinars, regional scientific meetings, publications, working groups, partnerships with other scientific societies and active participation in major African and international scientific forums. He expressed confidence that, through cooperation, shared expertise and a continued commitment to science, innovation and solidarity, SAA can further strengthen its role within Africa's health landscape and continue serving the needs of African populations.



Florence Riako Anam,
SAA Deputy Treasurer

VISION STATEMENT OF THE SAA DEPUTY TREASURER, FLORENCE RIAKO ANAM

In presenting her vision as a member of the Executive Board of the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), Florence Riako Anam reaffirmed her commitment to strengthening SAA as an African-led institution and advancing the impact of the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) as a platform for evidence-based action and collaboration.

She emphasized the importance of strengthening SAA and ICASA through enhanced institutional capacity, sustainable financing and strategic alignment to ensure that global health advances are translated into context-specific solutions that improve the quality of life of people living with and affected by HIV, while addressing stigma and discrimination and promoting integrated health and social support.

Drawing on her engagement with communities and networks of people living with HIV, she highlighted the importance of ensuring that community voices remain central to SAA's governance, policy development and programmes. Her priorities include advancing meaningful participation of people living with HIV, particularly young people, strengthening representation within governance and ICASA processes, promoting mentorship and leadership opportunities, and supporting the integration of HIV services into broader primary healthcare and universal health coverage frameworks.

She further reaffirmed her commitment to strengthening community-led approaches, sustainable governance and partnerships to advance SAA's mission of supporting health systems and contributing to an AIDS-free Africa founded on equity, dignity and community ownership.



**Prof. Morenike O. Ukpung,
SAA Board Member**

VISION STATEMENT OF THE SAA BOARD MEMBER, PROF. MORENIKE OLUWATOYIN UKPONG

In presenting her vision as the West Africa Representative to the SAA Governing Board, Prof. Ukpung reaffirmed her commitment to advancing the Society's continental mandate through African scientific leadership, regional solidarity and a strong focus on equity.

Drawing on more than two decades of experience as a researcher, clinician and advocate, she emphasized the importance of ensuring that Africa leads and shapes its own health narrative. She highlighted her commitment to promoting locally relevant science, evidence-based policymaking and knowledge translation, including through platforms such as the African Journal for AIDS and Infectious Diseases (AJAID).

Representing West Africa, she expressed her intention to strengthen regional collaboration, promote South-South partnerships, support institutional capacity building and ensure that the voices of adolescents and key populations remain central to Africa's HIV response. Grounded in an approach of social justice and human rights, she also emphasized the importance of advancing holistic HIV care that integrates broader health needs, including oral, mental and sexual health.

She reaffirmed her commitment to supporting SAA as a platform for African unity, innovation and collective action, while working towards a more equitable and sustainable health future for West Africa and the continent.



**Dr. Benjamin Djoudalbaye,
SAA Board Member**

VISION STATEMENT OF THE SAA BOARD MEMBER, DR. BENJAMIN DJOUDALBAYE

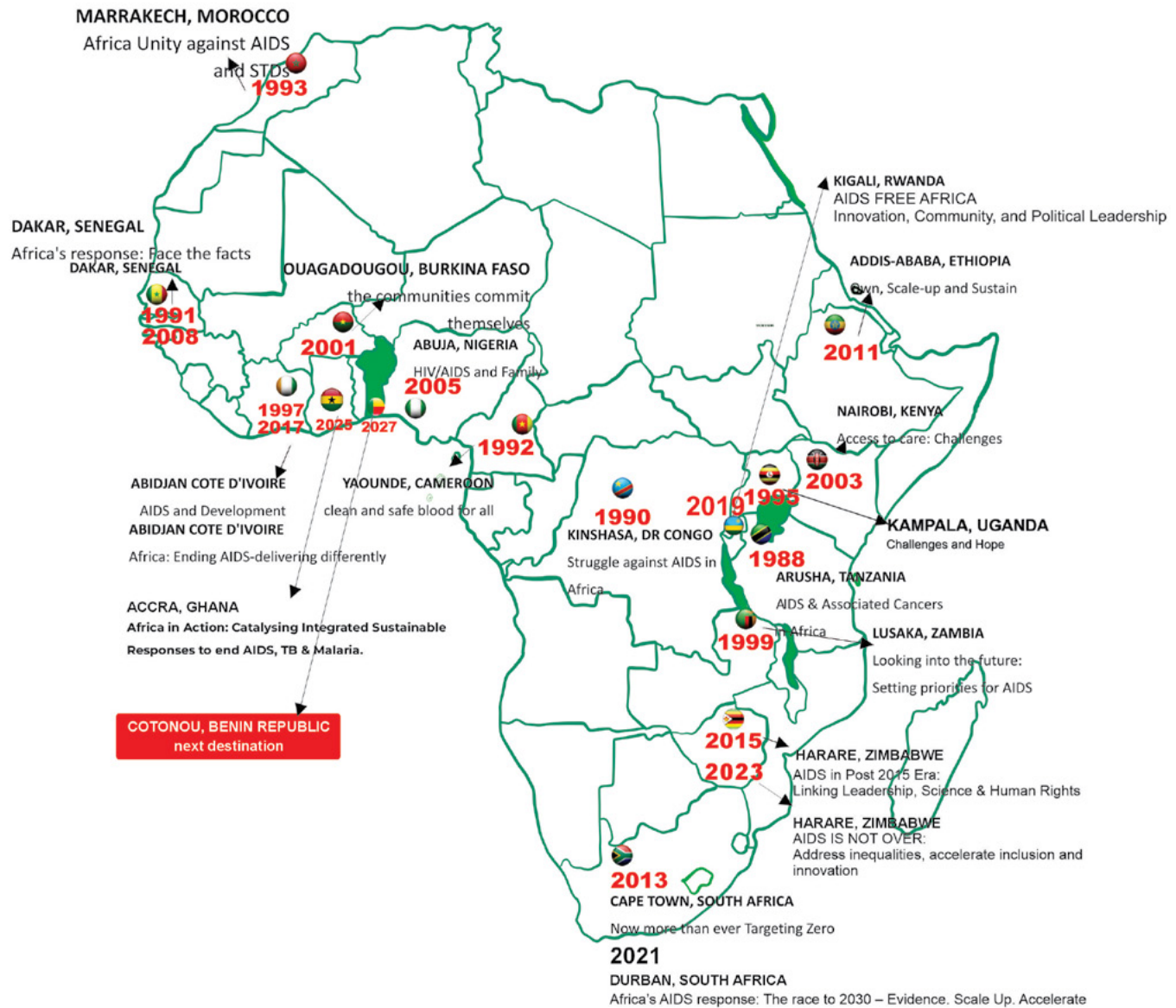
In presenting his vision as a member of the Executive Board of the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), Dr. Djoudalbaye reaffirmed his commitment to strengthening SAA and ICASA as dynamic, African-led platforms that advance evidence-informed policy, regional collaboration and equitable health outcomes.

He emphasized the importance of positioning SAA and ICASA not only as platforms for scientific exchange, but also as mechanisms for translating knowledge into policy and practice across the continent. His priorities include enhancing institutional visibility,

strengthening strategic partnerships, modernizing ICASA as a hybrid and year-round platform, and aligning SAA's work with continental priorities such as health security, vaccine self-reliance and integrated health systems.

He also highlighted the importance of collaboration with member states, research institutions, civil society and development partners to ensure that scientific evidence and community perspectives inform decision-making. His key areas of focus include evidence-to-policy translation, African leadership in research and innovation, and strengthened accountability through improved monitoring of ICASA's impact.

ICASA History Map



ICASA 2023 Zimbabwe Statistics



8,118 participants from **105** countries.



45% of delegates represented were women.



75% of ICASA 2023 plenary speakers were women.



200 in person scholarships were awarded.

1,571 attended the conference virtually.

517 scholarships awarded by host country (Ghana) for on-site attendance.



2,600 abstracts were received.



78 abstracts were selected for oral presentation.



815 abstracts were selected for poster exhibition.



95,606 people were reached through social media posts for the duration of the conference.



Over **8,481** visits to our virtual exhibition booths for the duration of the conference.



100 exhibitors showcased their products and services at ICASA 2023 Zimbabwe.



547 speakers presented at ICASA 2023 Zimbabwe



**Download the ICASA 2023
Conference Report here**

<https://bit.ly/4ahSpVw>

ICASA 2025 Ghana Statistics



3,169 participants from **87** countries.



43% of delegates represented were women.



60% of ICASA 2025 plenary speakers were women.



527 in person scholarships were awarded.

858 attended the conference virtually.

361 scholarships awarded by host country (Ghana) for on-site attendance.



1,864 abstracts were received.



75 abstracts were selected for oral presentation.



522 abstracts were selected for poster exhibition.



390,472 people were reached through social media posts for the duration of the conference..



Over **741** visits to our virtual exhibition booths for the duration of the conference.



51 exhibitors showcased their products and services at ICASA 2025 Ghana.



450 speakers presented at ICASA 2025 Ghana



Download the ICASA 2025 Conference Report Here
bit.ly/4cp6TXg

ICASA 2025 In Focus



H.E. Prof. Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, Vice President of the Republic of Ghana (4th from left, front row), SAA Executive Board members and members of the diplomatic corps during the 23rd Edition of ICASA held in Accra, Ghana



Dignitaries observing the performance of a Ghanaian cultural group



Performance by the Ghana Dance Ensemble

The 23rd International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA 2025), held in Accra, Ghana, from 3–8 December 2025 under the theme “Africa in Action: Catalyzing Integrated Sustainable Responses to End AIDS, TB & Malaria,” was guided by the following key objectives:

- **Catalyzing Africa's progress toward triple elimination**
Support the elimination of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria while building sustainable and resilient health systems, including through the adoption of innovative and digital technologies.
- **Strengthening cooperation and partnerships**
Promote collaboration among governments, civil society, communities, the private

sector and international organizations to enhance health security and improve pandemic preparedness and response across Africa.

- **Enhancing capacity and knowledge exchange**

Facilitate the exchange of expertise and best practices among healthcare professionals, researchers and policymakers to accelerate evidence-based responses to HIV and other infectious threats.

- **Empowering communities and protecting rights**

Empower communities affected by HIV and STIs and promote human rights and gender equality in health programmes and policies, with the aim of reducing stigma, discrimination and barriers to care.

- **Mobilizing domestic resources and political commitment**

Encourage African nations to increase domestic financing and political commitment to sustain progress towards the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets and broader health goals, especially in the context of declining international aid.

- **Strengthening health sovereignty and innovation adoption**

Promote African-led solutions, including regional manufacturing capacity, digital transformation and locally relevant innovations that improve access to prevention and treatment tools.

- **Addressing emerging health threats within integrated responses**

Expand the conference's scope to include emerging and re-emerging diseases and integrate responses across HIV, TB, malaria, STIs and other health challenges for more sustainable impact.

These objectives shaped ICASA 2025 into a platform not only for scientific and technical discussion, but also for political advocacy, community leadership, and continent-wide commitment to ending AIDS and strengthening health systems across Africa by 2030.



ICASA 2025 Conference Metrics



3,169 participants from **87** countries.



43% of delegates represented were women.



60% of ICASA 2025 plenary speakers were women.



527 in person scholarships were awarded



858 attended the conference virtually.



361 scholarships awarded by host country (Ghana) for on-site attendance



1,864 abstracts were received.



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390,472 people were reached through social media posts for the duration of the conference. Over **741** visits to our virtual exhibition booths for the duration of the conference. **450** speakers presented at ICASA 2025 Ghana.

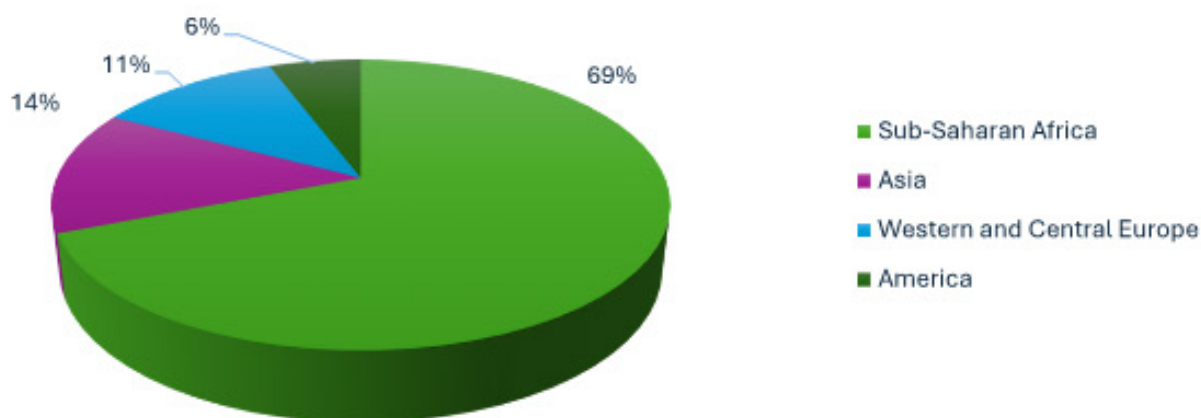


Delegates

The conference convened a total of 3,169 participants from 87 countries. The remaining categories included staff, pre-conference participants, media representatives and in-person exhibitors.

Region

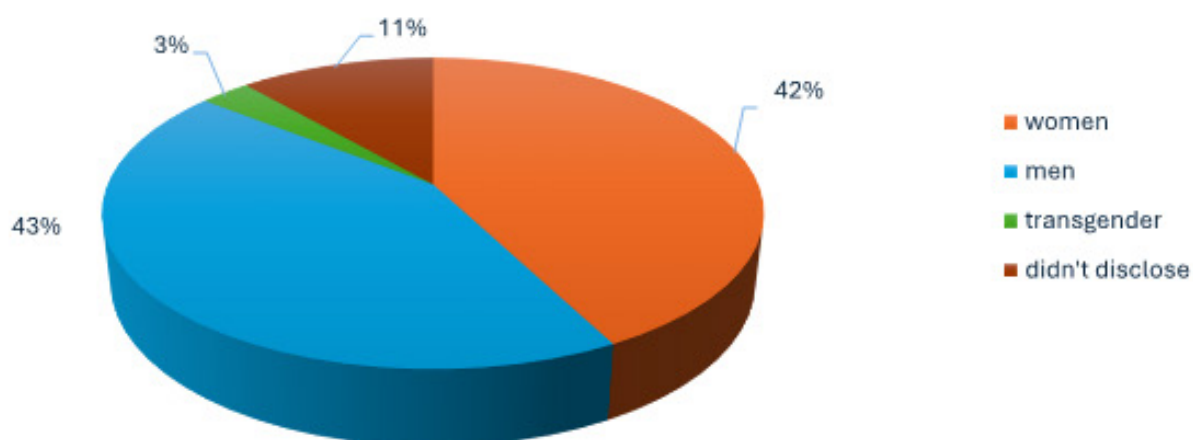
The regions with the largest representation at ICASA were Sub-Saharan Africa (**69%**) followed by Asia (**14%**) and Western and Central Europe (**11%**) and America (**6%**).



In total, **69%** of delegates came from Sub-Saharan Africa, followed by Asia, Western and Central Europe, and America.

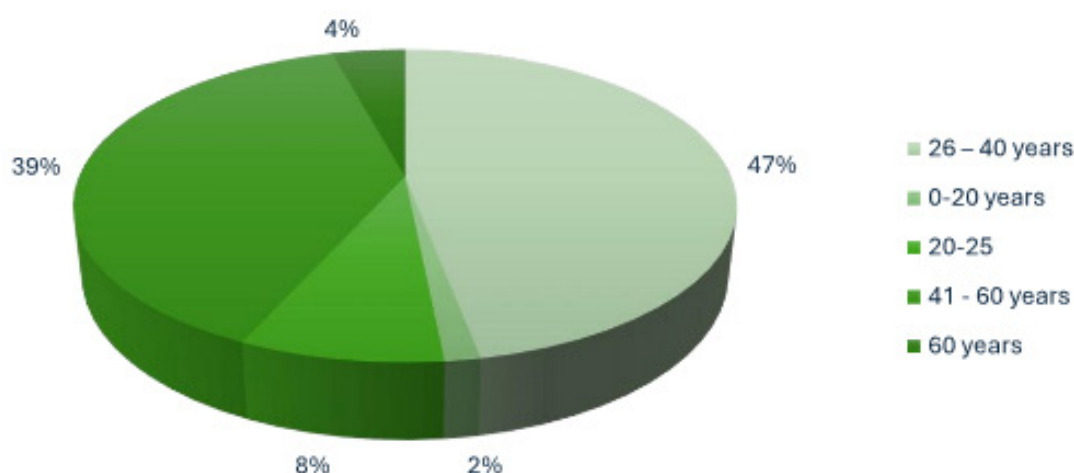
Gender

There were **42%** women, **43%** men, **3%** transgender and **11%** who did not wish to disclose their gender. A proportion of **1%** of the respondents chose "Other" as their preference.



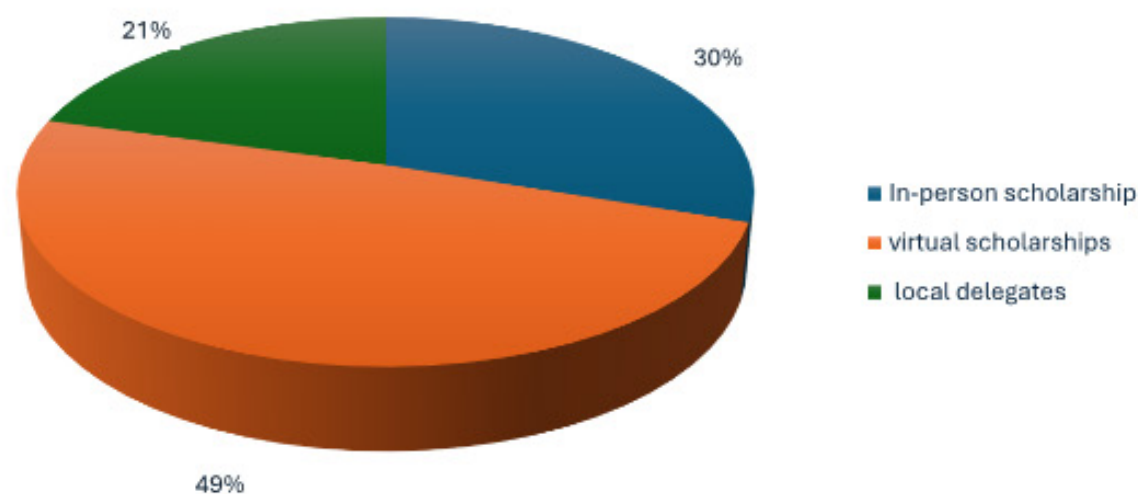
Age Group

Majority of the delegates were between the age ranges of 26 – 40 years (**47%**). Delegates between the ages of 0-20 (**2%**) and 20-25 constituted 8%, 41 - 60 years (**39%**) with **4%** of delegates above 60 years.



Scholarships

ICASA 2025 awarded **1,385 scholarships**. Scholarship funding was provided by the ICASA 2025 conference. **527 in-person** scholarship recipients with 858 scholarships for virtual attendees. The host country supported **361 local delegates** who attended in person. All scholarship recipients were granted registration and full virtual access to the conference. Scholarship recipients were from the five geographical regions of Africa. Very high scoring oral and poster presenters who applied for scholarships were selected and awarded scholarships. Media and activity organizers were also awarded scholarships. Scholarships were also awarded to general delegates, abstract presenters, media and programme activity organizers.





From left to right: Prof. Morenike Oluwatoyin Ukpong (SAA Treasurer), Miss Oluwashola Blessing Balogun (award winner), Prof. Nkandu Luo (former SAA President, 1999), and Mr. Luc Armand H. Bodea (ICASA Director and SAA Coordinator)

Winner of ICASA 2025 Edith Bongo Award

The Edith Lucie Bongo Ondimba Award is a Young Female Researcher Award established in memory of the former First Lady of Gabon, Edith Lucie Bongo Ondimba (1989- 2009). It was introduced to honor her legacy as a pioneer in the fight against the AIDS pandemic in Africa. The Award, valued at \$5,000, was instituted by President Denis Sassou Nguesso during a tribute ceremony held in Oyo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, on 9 March 2024, transforming remembrance into a renewed commitment to advancing African-led health research.

At ICASA 2025, the maiden edition of this award was presented to Oluwashola Blessing Balogun by Prof. Morenike Oluwatoyin Ukpong, Prof. Nkandu Luo, and Mr. Luc Armand H. Bodea, in recognition of her outstanding achievements, relentless dedication, and unwavering commitment to advancing the frontiers of health research.





ICASA Storytelling Video Competition:
First Winner, Dorcas Nyarko - Category A (18 to 35 years)

Winner of ICASA 2025 Storytelling Video Competition

At just five years old, Dorcas began taking daily medication without understanding why. Years later, while searching for the name of the medication she had been taking for a decade, she discovered that she was living with HIV. The revelation brought fear, anger and confusion, and she struggled to accept her diagnosis, eventually stopping her treatment.

With the unwavering support of her mother, she found the strength to overcome self-doubt and understand that HIV did not define her worth or her future. A difficult experience at school, where her privacy was challenged after a friend discovered her medication, became a turning point that sparked her journey as an advocate.

She transformed her personal experience into a mission of hope, volunteering with organizations including WAPCAS, Hope for Future Generations (HFFG) and Young Health Advocates Ghana (YHAG). Through her work as a peer educator and counselor, she has supported young people living with HIV, encouraged treatment adherence and advocated for youth inclusion in health decision-making spaces.

Today, as the National President of Young Health Advocates Ghana, she continues to use her voice to challenge stigma, promote awareness and inspire others living with HIV. Her journey from a young girl searching for answers to a confident advocate reflects resilience, courage and the power of turning personal challenges into positive change.



Key activities organised by the Society For AIDS in Africa (SAA) during International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa 2025 – SAA at 35

The Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) marked a historic milestone at the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa 2025 in Accra, Ghana. As SAA celebrated 35 years of leadership, advocacy, and continental impact, the conference served not only as a scientific gathering but also as a powerful commemoration of African resilience and innovation in the HIV response.

A high-level anniversary session reflected on SAA's journey from advocacy-driven beginnings to a continental institution shaping research, policy, and community engagement. The session explored milestones in Africa's HIV response, the evolution of ICASA as Africa's premier HIV conference, and the sustainable integration of HIV services into broader health systems. The dialogue reinforced Africa's leadership in shaping its own health agenda.

Celebrated on the theme: "Celebrating 35 years of advocacy, science and African leadership in the HIV response", speakers in a panel discussion at the celebration shed light on the formation of the society, the challenges in the HIV response on the

continent and the gains that had been made so far.

The speakers guided dignitaries and conference delegates through the Society's journey from its founding in 1989 to the present day. They recalled a period marked by intense stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV (PLWHIV), limited access to treatment, and high AIDS-related mortality, contrasting it with today's landscape of major medical breakthroughs and improved access to testing, treatment, and prevention.

The panel comprised former SAA Executive Board members: Professor Nkandu Luo, Professor Sheila Tlou, Dr Pierre Mpele, Professor Souleymane Mboup, Professor Robert Soudre, and Professor Samuel Ikwaras Okware, with Dr Aliou Sylla serving as moderator.

SAA was founded in 1989 during the fourth International Symposium on AIDS and Associated Cancers in Africa (now ICASA) in Marseille, France. It was established by African scientists, activists, and advocates with the support of then World Health Organization Director, Peter Piot.

Their efforts marked a pivotal moment in bringing the fight against HIV and AIDS to the African continent and strengthening Africa's voice in global health advocacy.

The anniversary has been commemorated alongside the 23rd edition of ICASA, which was hosted by Ghana. Described as a special edition, the conference provides an opportunity to celebrate the organization's achievements while reflecting on its progress toward fulfilling its vision and mission.

Professor Nkandu Luo described ICASA as a critical driver of scientific progress on the African continent, noting that its establishment brought together scientists and clinicians who were confronting HIV firsthand and created a platform for sharing knowledge and experience.

She recalled that, despite limited technology and extremely challenging conditions, some of the continent's most capable scientists worked tirelessly to advance research and care.

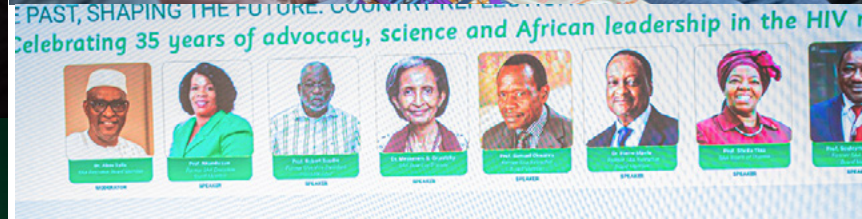
COMMUNITY FOCUS

Prof. Luo highlighted the evolution of ICASA as a platform linking science, policy and community action, emphasizing that scientific advances must translate into meaningful benefits for people affected by HIV. This led to the integration of the "community" approach at the 1999 Lusaka meeting, reinforcing more inclusive and people-centred HIV responses.

Reflecting on the early HIV response, she recalled the challenges of denial and stigma, particularly regarding women's vulnerability, which contributed to the establishment of the Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (SWAA) in 1988 to promote gender-responsive approaches, equity and human rights.

Sir Peter Piot acknowledged the leadership of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in advancing the global HIV response, while stressing the need for SAA to adapt to a changing global landscape by investing in a new generation of African health leaders and strengthening health sovereignty.

Dr Pierre Mpele also recalled the Abuja Declaration's commitment to increased domestic health financing, noting that only a limited number of African countries have achieved the 15 per cent health budget target.





SAA Secretary-General Dr. Aliou Sylla; Treasurer Prof. Morenike Oluwatoyin Ukpung; SAA Senior Marketing and Partnership Officer Mr. Chris Kwasi Nuatro; SAA Consultant, Madam Loretta Vanderpuye; Hospital CEO Dr. Yakubu Seidu Adam; Director of Pharmacy Dr. Charles Ofei-Palm; Chief Nursing Officer Madam Margaret Acheampong; Head of Public Relations Mr. Mustapha Salifu; and members of the Central Management Team.

COMMUNITY IMPACT: SOCIETY FOR AIDS IN AFRICA DONATES 200 MATTRESSES TO KORLE BU TEACHING HOSPITAL TO MARK 35TH ANNIVERSARY AND WORLD AIDS DAY

REPORT: SAA Mattress Donation to Korle Bu Teaching Hospital

Summary of Donation

The Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) donated 200 mattresses to Korle Bu Teaching Hospital to improve patient comfort and quality healthcare services.

Reason for Donation

This initiative contributed to strengthening the capacity of health infrastructure and preserving the dignity of patients. It also demonstrated SAA's commitment to providing tangible support to health facilities in the lead-up to World AIDS Day 2025 and ICASA 2025, as part of the celebration of its 35th anniversary.

Attendance

Key attendees included:

- SAA Secretary-General, **Dr. Aliou Sylla**;
- SAA Treasurer, **Prof. Morenike Oluwatoyin Ukpung**;
- SAA Senior Marketing and Partnership Officer, **Mr. Chris Kwasi Nuatro**;
- SAA Logistics Officer, **Mr. Leslie Sodjinu**;
- SAA Consultant, **Madam Loretta Vanderpuye**;
- Hospital CEO, **Dr. Yakubu Seidu Adam**;

- Director of Pharmacy, **Dr. Charles Ofei-Palm**;
- Chief Nursing Officer, **Madam Margaret Acheampong**;
- Head of Public Relations, **Mr. Mustapha Salifu**; and members of the Central Management Team.

Dr. Sylla called for renewed stakeholder commitment to ending AIDS, while Prof. Ukpung emphasized the donation's role in improving patient experience. Dr. Adam praised the partnership and reaffirmed the hospital's dedication to reducing stigma.



SAA Senior Marketing and Partnerships Officer, Mr. Chris K. Nuatro, handing over a mattress to a representative of Korle Bu Hospital

WORLD AIDS DAY COMMEMORATION- A LEGACY OF SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

Since its establishment in 1989, the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) has been at the forefront of Africa's response to HIV/AIDS through advocacy, research, and community engagement. As the Society marks its 35th anniversary, it continues to demonstrate its commitment to translating its mission into practical actions that improve the lives of people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

In celebration of its 35th anniversary and World AIDS Day, SAA donated 200 mattresses to Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Ghana's premier tertiary healthcare facility, as part of its ongoing commitment to strengthening healthcare infrastructure and improving patient care across Africa.

The donation, made on 1 December 2025, aligns with the year's global theme of

solidarity, community leadership, and the urgent need to protect the progress achieved in the HIV response. It also serves as a reminder of the importance of sustained investment in healthcare systems and infrastructure to ensure quality and dignified care for all.

Korle Bu Teaching Hospital provides care to thousands of patients annually, including people living with HIV/AIDS. The donated mattresses will enhance patient comfort across multiple wards and contribute to creating a more supportive environment for healing and recovery.

The donation to Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, alongside SAA's engagement with the Ghana AIDS Commission, reflected the Society's commitment to transforming commitments and discussions from platforms such as ICASA into meaningful action that benefits communities and strengthens health systems.



Community Village Award Ceremony

A special highlight was the Community Village Award Ceremony, where long-serving rapporteurs and dedicated contributors were honored. Over the years, these individuals have documented conference deliberations, preserved institutional memory, and strengthened the intellectual and advocacy backbone of ICASA. Their work has ensured that conversations held during conferences do not end when the sessions close, but instead continue to inform programming, research, and policy implementation across the continent. Their recognition underscored the value of sustained service and volunteerism in advancing Africa's HIV response.





From Left to Right: Prof. Dr. Samuel Ikwaras Okware, ICASA 1995 President, Dr. Fiona Braka, WHO Ghana Country Representative, Dr. David Parirenyatwa, Mr. SAA President, Prof. John Idoko, Former SAA President, Dr. Douglas Mombeshora, Minister of Health and Childcare, Zimbabwe and Dr. Pierre M'Pele, SAA Second President (1995 to 2005) during presentation of the Leadership award to Mr. Luc Armand H. Bodea, ICASA Director/ SAA Coordinator (Middle) for his dedicated service in leadership to the Society for AIDS in Africa

Personal Achievement Award

Over the years, following the establishment of the first functional SAA/ICASA Secretariat in Abuja from 2005 to 2009 under the leadership of the late Prof. Femi Soyinka, then SAA President, Mr. Luc Armand H. Bodea played a pivotal role in the institutional strengthening of the organization. He was instrumental in the establishment of the SAA/ICASA Permanent Secretariat in Accra, Ghana, where he helped build and nurture a strong professional team responsible for overseeing the management of ICASA and the affairs of the Society for AIDS in Africa. Under his leadership, emphasis was placed on strengthening institutional memory, improving operational efficiency, and reinforcing accountability within the organization.

The reengineering and consolidation of the Secretariat contributed significantly to the sustained growth of the ICASA platform. Over the past two decades, the Secretariat has successfully coordinated the organization of nine (9) ICASA conferences, facilitated the signing of seven Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with host countries, and supported the conduct of five SAA Board elections, reinforcing transparent governance and continuity in leadership. Today, the SAA/ICASA Secretariat continues to oversee the organization's operations with a team of 20 permanent staff members based at the headquarters in Accra, Ghana, ensuring the effective coordination of the conference and the broader activities of the Society for AIDS in Africa.

In recognition of this longstanding commitment and leadership, members of the outgoing SAA Executive Board presented a Leadership Award to Mr. Luc Armand H. Bodea, ICASA Director/ SAA Coordinator, acknowledging his dedicated service and contributions to strengthening the institutional foundation and global relevance of SAA and ICASA. The award underscored his role in sustaining the conference as Africa's

leading platform for scientific exchange, policy dialogue, and community engagement in the fight against HIV and related health challenges.



Hon. Dr. David Pagwesese Parirenyatwa, SAA President and ICASA 2025 Chair, receives the Personal Achievement Award from Dr. Douglas Mombeshora, Minister of Health and Childcare, Zimbabwe, Prof. Nkandu Luo, ICASA 1999 President and Dr. Pierre M'Pele, SAA Second President (1995 to 2005) in recognition of his outstanding dedication to HIV/AIDS advocacy and African health sovereignty.



Dr. Aliou Sylla, Secretary General of the Society of AIDS in Africa (2022–2025), receives the Personal Achievement Award from Prof. John Idoko, Former SAA President and Prof. Dr. Samuel Ikwaras Okware, ICASA 1995 President for his outstanding dedication and commitment to the HIV/AIDS and Health Systems Strengthening in Africa.



Prof. Morenike Ukpog, SAA Treasurer, receives the Personal Achievement Award from Prof. Dr. Samuel Ikwaras Okware, ICASA 1995 President for her outstanding dedication and commitment to the HIV/AIDS and Health Systems Strengthening in Africa



Prof. Mohamed Chakroun, SAA Vice President, receives the Personal Achievement Award for his outstanding dedication and commitment to HIV/AIDS and Health Systems Strengthening in Africa.



Dr. Nonhlanhla Fikile Ndlovu, Deputy SAA Secretary General receives the Personal Achievement Award from Prof. Dr. Samuel Ikwaras Okware, ICASA 1995 President, for her outstanding dedication and commitment to the HIV/AIDS and Health Systems Strengthening in Africa



Dr. Emmy Chesire, SAA Board Member, and First Lady of Baringo County, receives her Personal Achievement Award from Prof. John Idoko, Former SAA President and Prof. Dr. Samuel Ikwaras Okware, ICASA 1995 President for her outstanding dedication and commitment to the HIV/AIDS and Health Systems Strengthening in Africa



Brig. Gen. (Dr.) Alain Azondekon, Beninese Pediatrician, Epidemiologist Military officer, and Rapporteur General from ICASA 2015 to date, receives the Personal Achievement Award from Dr. Douglas Mombeshora, Minister of Health and Childcare, Zimbabwe and Prof. Sheila Tlou, SAA trustee for his outstanding dedication and commitment to the SAA/ICASA International Secretariat



Ms. Olympia Laswai, a Tanzanian Public Health Specialist, Program Coordinator specializing in HIV/AIDS care and treatment, and SAA Member, receives the Personal Achievement Award from Dr. Douglas Mombeshora, Minister of Health and Childcare, Zimbabwe and Prof. Sheila Tlou SAA Trustee for her outstanding dedication and commitment to the SAA/ICASA International Secretariat



Dr. Marijanatu Abdulai, Ghanaian epidemiologist and public health researcher at National AIDS Control Programme specializing in HIV/AIDS and infectious diseases, and SAA Member, receives the Personal Achievement Award from Dr. Douglas Mombeshora, Minister of Health and Childcare, Zimbabwe and Prof. Sheila Tlou, SAA Trustee for her outstanding dedication and commitment to the SAA/ICASA International Secretariat.



Dr. Kingsley Saa-Touh Mort, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Social Work at the University of Ghana, Legon, and SAA Member, receives the Personal Achievement Award from Hon. Dr. David Parirenyatwa , SAA President and Prof. Nkandu Luo, Former SAA Board member for his outstanding dedication and commitment to the SAA/ICASA International Secretariat



Mr. Innocent Laison, SAA member, receives the Personal Achievement Award from Dr. Douglas Mombeshora, Minister of Health and Childcare, Zimbabwe for his outstanding dedication and commitment to the SAA/ICASA International Secretariat



Dr. Emil Asamoah-Odei, Former Chief of Staff at the WHO Regional Office for Africa and SAA Board Member, receives the Personal Achievement Award from Hon. Dr. David Parirenyatwa, SAA President and Mr. Luc Armand H. Bodea, ICASA Director, for his outstanding dedication and commitment to the SAA/ICASA International Secretariat.



Dr. Henry Ajewi-Narh Nagai, Ghanaian Public health Expert, Former Chief of Party for the USAID JSI Ghana Care Continuum Project, and SAA Member, receives the Personal Achievement Award for his outstanding dedication and commitment to the SAA/ICASA International Secretariat



Mr. Martin-Mary Falana, Nigerian development expert, public health practitioner, gender activist and SAA Member, receives the Personal Achievement Award from Hon. Dr. David Parirenyatwa, SAA President and Mr. Luc Armand H. Bodea, ICASA Director, for his outstanding dedication and commitment to the SAA/ICASA International Secretariat



Dr. Kharmacelle Prosper Akanbong, Director General of Ghana AIDS Commission receiving the Personal Achievement Award from Dr. Douglas Mombeshora, Minister of Health and Childcare, Zimbabwe and Prof. Sheila Tlou, SAA Trustee, on behalf of Prof. William Ampofo, founding Chief Executive Officer of Ghana's National Vaccine Institute, for his outstanding dedication and commitment to the SAA/ICASA International Secretariat.



Prof. Sheila Tlou received, on behalf of Dr. Marsha Martin—an American public health expert, gender activist, former delegate to the UNAIDS Program Coordinating Board, and Director of GNPBH—the Personal Achievement Award for her outstanding dedication and commitment to the SAA/ICASA International Secretariat. The award was presented by Dr. Douglas Mombeshora, Minister of Health and Child Care of Zimbabwe, and Hon. Dr. David Pagwesese Parirenyatwa, SAA President



Dr. Bernard Madzima, Chief Executive Officer of Zimbabwe's National AIDS Council and SAA Member, receives the award on behalf of Mr. Raymond Yekeye, Operations Director, from Hon. Dr. David Parirenyatwa, SAA President and Prof. Nkandu Luo, ICASA 1999 President for the Personal Achievement Award for his outstanding dedication and commitment to the SAA/ICASA International Secretariat.



Launch of the African Journal for AIDS and Infectious Diseases (AJAID)

In a landmark moment, SAA officially launched its scientific publication platform, the African Journal for AIDS and Infectious Diseases (AJAID). The journal aims to promote African-led research, amplify regional scientific voices, and enhance knowledge production on HIV and other infectious diseases. This marks a significant step in strengthening Africa's research ecosystem.

The journal will prioritize locally relevant science and help bridge the longstanding gap in Africa-led research output.

Speaking at the launch event held at H. E. John Dramani Mahama Room at the Conference Center, AJAID Committee Chairperson, Nigeria, and SAA Treasurer, Prof. Ukpong congratulated the Society for AIDS in Africa for its bold initiative. She described the launch as a significant milestone in the history of Africa's scientific community.

"We are not just attending a conference; we are witnessing the birth of a new vessel for African Scientific excellence" Prof. Ukpong remarked.

Highlighting its purpose, Prof. Ukpong also emphasized that the journal provides a platform for locally relevant research. "For too long, the story of HIV and AIDS and other infectious diseases in Africa has been told through the lens that are not our own. While we value global collaboration, there is an undeniable necessity for a platform that prioritizes the African context, one that provides a dedicated space for high quality, locally relevant research that directly informs our policies and practices. The African Journal for AIDS and Infectious Diseases in Africa is that platform. This journal is not

merely a collection of articles; it is a strategic tool designed to bridge the gap between scientific discovery and public health impact”.

Prof. Ukpong emphasized that AJAID is not merely a collection of articles, but a strategic tool aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The journal is anchored on four core pillars:

SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals: AJAID aims to connect African researchers with global partners, fostering both north-south and south-south collaborations, and strengthening institutional research capacity.

SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being: By rigorously vetting and publishing breakthrough research on HIV/AIDS and co-infections, AJAID seeks to accelerate the deployment of life-saving treatments and prevention strategies across Africa.

SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities: Through an open-access model, the journal ensures that researchers at all career stages, from early-career scientists to established experts, can contribute, democratizing the production of knowledge.

“Health inequalities is often fuelled by a lack of access to knowledge, and by providing an open and accessible platform for the African researchers, ranging from early-career scientists to established experts, we are democratising the production of knowledge.” she added.

Equity and Interdisciplinary Excellence: The journal will support interdisciplinary research, capacity-building initiatives, and the development of Africa-specific solutions to infectious disease challenges.

Prof. Ukpong noted that AJAID will begin as a P-1 level journal, facilitating rapid indexing in major databases such as PubMed. She invited researchers, clinicians, policymakers, and community advocates to submit manuscripts, reviews, and case studies to help build a lasting repository of African knowledge.

THEMATIC AREAS FOR MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION

1. **HIV & AIDS Management:** Explore innovative approaches to HIV prevention, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), treatment as prevention (TasP), and adherence strategies. Also, discuss the challenges and successes in scaling up antiretroviral therapy (ART) across the continent.
2. **Community Engagement and Empowerment:** Highlight community-led initiatives, involvement of key populations (such as sex workers, men who have sex with men, and people who inject drugs), and strategies to reduce stigma and discrimination. Address broader health and social issues affecting PLHIV (people living with HIV) and their families.
3. **Health Systems Strengthening:** Investigate health system challenges related to HIV care, including capacity building, health workforce development, supply chain

management, and integration of HIV services with other health programs (e.g., TB, malaria, maternal health).

4. Emerging issues including Intergration, Polycrises, Infections and Co-Infections: Beyond HIV, explore other infectious diseases affecting PLHIV, such as tuberculosis (TB), hepatitis, and sexually transmitted (STIs). Discuss strategies for integrated care and management.
5. Social-economic and political determinants of Health: Analyze socioeconomic factors influencing HIV outcomes, including poverty, education, gender inequality, and access to healthcare. Consider the impact of these determinants on prevention, treatment, and overall well-being.
6. Research and Innovation: Feature cutting-edge research on HIV/AIDS, including epidemiology, clinical trials, behavioral studies, and implementation science. Highlight technological innovations, such as mobile health (mHealth) solutions and telemedicine.

The launch of the bilingual journal concluded with the unveiling of AJAID's logo and website by ICASA officials, signaling a new chapter in Africa's health research and response efforts.



From left to right: Hon. Dr. Nchabi Richard Kamwi; Dr. Emmy Chesire, SAA Board Member; Dr. Ignatia Nonhlanhla Ndlovu, SAA Deputy Secretary-General; Prof. Dr. Samuel Ikwaras Okware; Mr. Luc Armand H. Bodea, ICASA Director/SAA Coordinator; Prof. Morenike O. Ukpong, SAA Treasurer; Dr. Aliou Sylla, SAA Secretary-General

AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF)

At ICASA 2025 in Accra, Ghana, the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), in partnership with the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) Global Public Health Institute, successfully convened the inaugural High-Level Summit on Regional Health Leadership and Sustainable Financing. The summit, attended by some Ministers, keynote speakers, Global Public Health and Civil Society Experts generated strong momentum for advancing Africa's New Public Health Order and reaffirmed the importance of sustainable financing, regional manufacturing, and community-centered health systems.

Building on the success of the inaugural summit, SAA and AHF are committed to institutionalizing this high-level platform as a recurring feature of future ICASA conferences. The partnership will continue to convene African leaders and key stakeholders to strengthen political commitment, promote domestic resource mobilization, accelerate local production of vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics, and reinforce regional cooperation to build a more resilient, self-reliant, and equitable public health architecture.



From left to right: Hon. Dr. David Pagwesese Parirenyatwa, SAA President; Dr. Penninah Lutung, Executive Vice-President, AHF



From left to right: Dr. Thembisile Xulu, CEO, SANAC; Grace Kumwenda, Research Engagement, AVAC; Grace Kamau, Regional Coordinator for ASWA

ASWA (African Sex Workers Alliance)

Advocating for the rights, health, safety, and economic empowerment of sex workers across Africa; promoting decriminalization, access to stigma free HIV prevention and treatment services, protection from violence and discrimination, and meaningful inclusion of sex worker led organizations in policymaking and HIV response planning.

The session was part of ICASA's community programme and focused on why choice in HIV prevention_ having access to a range of scientifically proven prevention methods and meaningful decision-making_ is essential for integrated and sustainable HIV responses.



From left to right: Mr. Luc Armand H. Bodea, ICASA Director/SAA Coordinator, Ambassador Amerley Awua-Asamoia and Elsie

SWAA paid courtesy visit to SAA to conclude Donation and Support Initiative

Ahead of ICASA 2025, representatives of the Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (SWAA), led by Ambassador Amerley Awua-Asamoia and Ms. Elsie Ayeh, paid a courtesy visit to the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), where they were received by Mr. Luc Armand Bodea, ICASA Director and SAA Coordinator. The visit reaffirmed the strong partnership between the two organizations and provided an opportunity for SWAA to express its appreciation for SAA's strategic support toward the organization's revitalization in Ghana and across Africa.

As part of its commitment to strengthening SWAA's institutional capacity, SAA provided essential administrative equipment, including laptops and a printer, and facilitated strategic technical assistance through the deployment of a consultant to support the organization's repositioning and the development of a new strategic plan. SAA also enabled SWAA's participation in ICASA 2025, creating an important platform to enhance the organization's visibility, strengthen its engagement within the continental HIV response, and reconnect with SWAA International.

The engagement reaffirmed the shared commitment of both organizations to sustained collaboration and institutional strengthening. By combining technical expertise, strategic guidance, and capacity-building support, the partnership is positioning SWAA to re-establish itself as a vibrant and effective organization, contributing to the HIV response and advancing women's leadership in health across Africa.



HIV and Ageing: Addressing Emerging Realities

A dedicated session examined the growing population of people ageing with HIV. Discussions centered on long-term treatment management, co-morbidities, and chronic care integration, highlighting the need for forward-looking policies and integrated care models.

Demographic Shifts & Aging with HIV

Speakers underscored that with widespread access to antiretroviral therapy, HIV has become a chronic condition for many, leading to a rapidly growing population of people of 50 years and older living with HIV across Africa. This demographic shift raises new care needs not yet fully addressed by existing HIV programmes.

Discussion points included:

1. The need to recognize aging with HIV as an ongoing public health priority, not just a side note in clinical care

An evidence that aging populations with HIV experience higher rates of non communicable diseases (NCDs) (e.g., cardiovascular, renal, bone health issues) and age related conditions that intersect with HIV clinical care needs.

2. Integrated, Person Centered Care Models

A major emphasis was on integrating HIV care with chronic disease

management and broader health systems, rather than treating HIV in isolation.

Speakers highlighted that:

- Comorbidities, such as diabetes, hypertension, neurocognitive decline, and frailty, require care models that bridge HIV treatment with other specialized health services.
- Traditional HIV programmes may not be fully equipped for long term aging care, creating gaps in continuity and coordination of services.

3. Policy & Health System Action

The session also focused on policy implications, calling for:

- Forward looking national HIV strategies that explicitly include aging populations;
- Health system reforms to ensure integrated chronic care pathways;
- Training for health workers on aging specific HIV issues; and
- Data systems to better track aging trends and outcomes among people living with HIV.

Speakers noted that without these policy pivots, older adults living with HIV risk being underserved by health systems mainly geared toward prevention and early treatment.



Students from Accra Girls' Senior High School

Youth Special Session: The Future is Now

Young leaders took center stage in a dynamic youth-focused session that emphasized meaningful youth engagement, innovation in prevention strategies, and intergenerational dialogue. The session reaffirmed that Africa's youth are not just beneficiaries but drivers of change.



Mr. Shawn Dalmas, session moderator and content creator from Kenya



Ms. Rafiatou Soro from Burkina Faso

1. EMPOWERING YOUTH VOICES AND EXPERIENCES

- The session brought together youth leaders and advocates to discuss the lived experiences of young people living with HIV, especially the barriers they encounter in accessing care.
- Speakers highlighted how stigma remains a major challenge, including:

- Social stigma — rejection or judgment from communities;
- Institutional stigma — discriminatory policies or practices;
- Self-stigmatization — internalized shame or fear that delays care-seeking;
- Healthcare stigma — negative treatment by providers;
- Perceived stigma — fear of being judged that prevents service use.

2. COMBATING STIGMATIZATION

- The discussion explored the harmful impact of stigma on mental health, social isolation, and health outcomes for young people living with HIV.
- Youth speakers urged increased education, awareness campaigns, inclusive policies, and better training for health workers to create safer, more supportive environments.

3. HARNESSING DIGITAL ADVOCACY

- A major focus was the transformative role of digital tools in youth activism and health advocacy.
- Digital platforms were celebrated for:
- Speed of communication, allowing rapid responses to issues;
- Accessibility — enabling voices without institutional backing to reach wide audiences;
- Authenticity — lived experience shared online builds trust and relevance.
- Examples like South Africa's Purple Campaign were cited to show how social media can mobilize communities and spark social change.
- Speakers also noted how artificial intelligence and digital strategies can help target messages, mobilize resources, support crowdfunding, and expand visibility for youth-led health actions.

4. YOUTH LEADERSHIP & INCLUSION

- The session emphasized that youth are not just beneficiaries but leaders in shaping health responses.
- Participants underscored the need for:
- Inclusive health systems that hear youth perspectives,
- Youth-centered advocacy as a catalyst for policy change,
- Harnessing creativity and innovation from young people to strengthen HIV care, rights, and outreach.



Group photograph of Speakers at the maiden edition of the High Level Meeting on Traditional Medicine: From Left to Right (second person) Dr. Aholofon Laurent Assogba, Former Deputy Director General, WAHO, Prof. Medegan Faglas-Jérôme, Director of Research at the University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin, Dr. Valentine Kiki Medegan, Representative of the President of the Republic National Council for the Fight against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria, Hepatitis, STIs and Epidemics, Dr. Koudjo Tokpanou, National AMR Focal Person, Benin, and Mr. Luc Armand H. Bodea, ICASA Director

Traditional Medicine Dialogue

Recognizing Africa's rich healing traditions, a session explored the role of traditional medicine within HIV response frameworks. The discussion encouraged collaboration between conventional and traditional health systems while promoting evidence-based integration.

1. STRENGTHENING TRADITIONAL MEDICINE IN PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

A major session titled "Strengthening the Role of Traditional Medicine in Primary Health Care in West Africa" brought together academics, policymakers, practitioners, and global health partners. Main points included:

- **Balancing efficacy and safety:** Experts stressed that traditional remedies can be effective, but scientific research and safety testing are essential to build trust and protect patients.
- **Research gaps:** There was emphasis on the need for more rigorous research and R&D to validate, standardize, and scale traditional medicines.
- **Training and collaboration:** Strengthening practitioners' capacity through partnerships between traditional healers and biomedical researchers was highlighted.
- **Policy integration:** Speakers called for national and regional regulatory frameworks to guide safe integration into health systems.

2. INTEGRATION INTO PRIMARY HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS

Representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO) and national institutions discussed how traditional medicine fits into broader health services:

- Scaling up integration: WHO emphasized that including traditional medicine in primary healthcare systems can improve access and equity, especially in underserved communities.
- Examples of progress: Ghana and Tanzania were cited as having increased facilities integrating traditional care alongside conventional medicine.
- Insurance & policy issues: Discussions highlighted challenges like the lack of health insurance coverage for herbal prescriptions and the need for supportive policies.

3. SAFETY, SUSTAINABILITY & STANDARDIZATION

Speakers also explored broader structural and environmental issues:

- Regulatory standards: The need for harmonized safety and efficacy standards for traditional products was underlined.
- Sustainability: Concern was raised that medicinal plants could become endangered without sustainable cultivation practices.

4. TRADITIONAL MEDICINE & UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE (UHC)

At the conference level, WHO framed traditional medicine as part of achieving Universal Health Coverage in Africa:

- Traditional medicine's broad usage (up to 80 % of populations globally and in Africa) was used to argue for its structured inclusion in health systems.
- Holistic care and resource optimization were cited as advantages of well-regulated traditional practices.





Rapporteurs' Summary Report

The conference concluded with a comprehensive synthesis by the rapporteurs, highlighting key scientific findings, policy recommendations, community priorities, and strategic commitments to ensure that the outcomes of ICASA 2025 translate into sustained action beyond the conference. As the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) marks 35 years of leadership, the closing session reaffirmed the collective commitment to strengthening African research and leadership, advancing partnerships, supporting communities, and driving sustainable health solutions across the continent.

While acknowledging Africa's progress in expanding HIV testing and antiretroviral therapy, rapporteurs noted that prevention efforts continue to lag, particularly among young people and key populations. They called for accelerated implementation of comprehensive prevention strategies, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), condom programmes, sexual health education, and community-led interventions.

The central focus of the discussions was the integration of HIV, tuberculosis (TB), and malaria services within primary healthcare systems. Rapporteurs emphasized that fragmented health services, workforce shortages, weak infrastructure, and fragmented financing continue to undermine health outcomes. They recommended strengthening primary healthcare, integrating HIV services with maternal and child health programmes, and expanding the use of digital health technologies.

The discussions also underscored the urgent need for sustainable domestic financing as declining external support threatens the continuity of HIV programmes. Participants called for increased national health investments, innovative financing mechanisms, and stronger public-private partnerships to ensure long-term sustainability.

Community leadership was identified as a cornerstone of an effective HIV response. Rapporteurs emphasized the critical role of community-based organizations in improving access to services, reducing stigma, and reaching key populations, while urging governments to provide sustainable support and ensure meaningful community participation in policy development and service delivery.

The conference further highlighted the need to address stigma, discrimination, and legal barriers that continue to impede HIV testing, treatment, and care. Participants advocated for human rights-based approaches, legal reforms, and strengthened capacity among healthcare workers to deliver inclusive and non-discriminatory services.

Recognizing the disproportionate impact of HIV on young people, the rapporteurs called for greater investment in youth leadership, youth-friendly health services, and comprehensive sexuality education. They also emphasized the growing role of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, telemedicine, and mobile health applications in strengthening disease surveillance, patient care, and community outreach.

Scientific sessions showcased advances in long-acting antiretroviral therapies, HIV prevention technologies, improved diagnostics, and vaccine research, while reaffirming the importance of African-led research and innovation in addressing the continent's health priorities.

In their concluding recommendations, the rapporteurs called for stronger and more resilient health systems, increased domestic health financing, greater support for community-led responses, the protection of human rights, investment in youth leadership, and continued promotion of African scientific research and innovation. They concluded that achieving the 2030 targets for HIV, TB, and malaria will require sustained political commitment, community leadership, innovation, and strong collaboration among governments, researchers, communities, and development partners.





Organization of African First Ladies for Development (OAFLAD): High-Level Meeting at ICASA 2025 Conference

On the margins of the 23rd International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA 2025), the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), in collaboration with the Organization of African First Ladies for Development (OAFLAD), convened a High-Level Meeting to reaffirm the commitment of African First Ladies and governments to achieving an AIDS-free generation.

The meeting focused on accelerating the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B through stronger political commitment, increased sustainable domestic financing, enhanced multi-sectoral collaboration, and strengthened health systems. It also highlighted the important role of African First Ladies in promoting political ownership and fostering partnerships among governments, civil society and development partners.

Recognizing that mother-to-child transmission remains a significant public health challenge in Africa due to limited access to quality healthcare, socio-cultural barriers and insufficient political commitment, the meeting sought to build on the momentum of previous ICASA High-Level Meetings and advance the Triple Elimination Agenda. The discussions reinforced the shared commitment to ending AIDS in children and mothers and achieving an AIDS-free generation by 2030.

OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING:

- Share best practices and lessons learned from African countries on preventing vertical transmission and implementing the Triple Elimination framework.
- Reaffirm and strengthen political commitment to the elimination of mother -to-child



transmission of HIV, Syphilis, and Hepatitis B.

- Foster multi-sectoral partnerships to support national EMTCT strategies and the Global Alliance to End AIDS in Children.
- Identify gaps, opportunities, and priority actions for achieving the 95 -95-95 targets for mothers and children by 2030; and
- Advocate for Domestic financing reforms to support African Health systems

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Strengthened Partnerships to advance the Global Alliance to end AIDS in Children and Triple elimination initiatives in Africa.
- Renewed high -level commitment by African First Ladies and governments to EMTCT and the Triple Elimination Agenda.
- Strengthened partnerships between governments, civil society, development partners, and communities to support country -level implementation.
- Agreed roadmap outlining key action points to accelerate progress towards the 95 -95-95 targets and elimination of mother -to-child transmission, as well as pediatric

HIV services.

- Increased visibility and advocacy for OAFLAD's leadership role in supporting the health and rights of women and children.

OPENING REMARKS

In her welcome address, H.E. Lordina Mahama underscored the moral and political responsibility of African First Ladies to safeguard the health and dignity of women and children. She called for a shift from advocacy to concrete action, emphasizing that the elimination of preventable infections in children is achievable through sustained political commitment, coordinated action, and increased investment.

In his opening remarks, Hon. Dr. David Pagwesese Parirenyatwa, President of the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), welcomed the distinguished participants and paid tribute to the leadership of the African First Ladies, particularly H.E. Lordina Mahama, for their continued advocacy in advancing HIV and broader public health priorities across the continent. He also commended the longstanding partnership between SAA and OAFLAD, noting that the First Ladies' Forum has become a key feature of ICASA, strengthening high-level advocacy and collaboration over the years.

Dr. Parirenyatwa further highlighted SAA's more than 35-year legacy in advancing dialogue, policy engagement, and partnerships to address HIV, STIs, and emerging health challenges in Africa. He concluded by thanking the Government and people of Ghana for hosting ICASA 2025 and expressed appreciation to H.E. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana, for his support in ensuring the successful convening of the meeting in Accra.

THE BURDEN OF PREVENTABLE TRANSMISSION

Participants examined the continued transmission of HIV, Syphilis, and Hepatitis B during pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding. Evidence presented highlighted that these infections are largely preventable through early screening, timely treatment, and integrated maternal health services. Data from global health agencies indicate that mother-to-child transmission rates can be reduced to below 5% when comprehensive interventions are effectively implemented.

NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY -LEVEL RESPONSES

Ghana's experience in community outreach was presented as a model of effective practice. Through collaboration with the Ghana AIDS Commission, nationwide initiatives have expanded access to HIV screening and counselling, early diagnosis and treatment, community awareness programmes, and youth and family health education. These interventions were identified as critical in bridging service delivery gaps and improving access to essential health services.

CONTINENTAL LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS

H.E. Dr. Fatima Maada Bio underscored Africa's collective commitment to safeguarding maternal and child health. She described the triple elimination agenda as a moral promise to future generations and emphasized the importance of partnerships in strengthening health systems and expanding integrated services. The Organization of African First Ladies for Development reaffirmed its commitment to advancing universal access to high-quality Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission services under its 2025 –2030 strategic framework.



From Left to Right: Ghanaian Queen Mothers, Hon. Dr. David Parirenyatwa, SAA President, H.E. Madam Kartumu Yarta Boakai (Liberia), H.E. Lordina Dramani Mahama (Ghana), H.E. Dr. Fatima Maada Bio (Sierra Leone, President of OAFLAD), H.E. Fatoumatta Bah Barrow (The Gambia), H.E. Mrs. Rachel Ruto (Kenya), H.E. Tobeka Stacie Madiba Zuma (Former First Lady of South Africa) and Winnie Byanyima UNAIDS Executive Director.

ADDRESSING STIGMA AND SOCIAL BARRIERS

Participants highlighted stigma and discrimination as major impediments to prevention and treatment uptake. Sustained community engagement, public education, and policy reform were identified as essential strategies to eliminate stigma and ensure equitable access to services for all women and children.

KEY MESSAGES

Participants emphasized that eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV, syphilis, and hepatitis B is achievable with coordinated political leadership and adequate resources. Women's leadership was recognized as central to shaping policy, mobilizing communities, and advancing rights-based health responses. Integrated maternal and child health services were identified as essential to achieving triple elimination,

while stigma reduction was highlighted as a priority public health intervention. Strong partnerships at national, regional, and global levels were also recognized as critical to sustaining progress.

FROM ICASA TO ICASA+ or ICAHA (International Conference on AIDS and Health in Africa)

OUTCOMES AND COMMITMENTS

Member states of OAFLAD present at the meeting reaffirmed their commitment to accelerate the implementation of triple elimination strategies across Africa. They pledged to expand access to integrated Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission services, strengthen community outreach and public education initiatives, promote policies that protect the rights of women and children, and enhance collaboration among governments, civil society, and global health partners.

CONCLUSION

The high -level side event demonstrated strong political leadership and continental solidarity in advancing the triple elimination agenda. African First Ladies reaffirmed their shared commitment to safeguarding maternal and child health and ensuring that no child is born with a preventable infection. The meeting reinforced the urgency of translating commitments into measurable action to achieve elimination targets by 2030.

Since its creation, the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) has played a leading role in Africa's response to HIV/AIDS, notably through the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA), which has become the continent's largest scientific and policy forum on HIV/AIDS. This historical identity remains one of SAA's greatest strategic assets.

However, the global and African public health landscape has evolved considerably since the establishment of SAA. Traditional HIV/AIDS donors including PEPFAR, the Global Fund, Unitaids, the World Bank, and the European Union are increasingly shifting their focus toward health systems strengthening, Universal Health Coverage (UHC), integrated service delivery, and health security. This transition is occurring alongside stagnating or declining funding dedicated exclusively to vertical HIV programmes.

At the same time, African countries are increasingly integrating HIV responses into their national health strategies, health information systems, and essential health service packages, in line with the One Health approach and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 3).

In response to this evolving context, SAA is proposing a set of targeted amendments to its Constitution, covering four key provisions: Article 3 (Nature and Mandate of the Organization), Article 4.1 (Regional and National Branches), Article 5 (Statutory Objectives), and Article 9 (ICASA and Other Conferences).

The proposed reform follows a strategy of controlled expansion. HIV/AIDS will remain the historical foundation and strategic priority of SAA. At the same time, the Organization's mandate will be explicitly broadened to promote the integration of HIV/AIDS within stronger, more resilient, and people-centred health systems, consistent with the One Health approach. This evolution will preserve the identity, scientific credibility, and leadership that SAA has built over decades while positioning the Organization to respond effectively to emerging public health challenges.

These constitutional amendments pursue two complementary strategic objectives:

1. To ensure that SAA remains relevant and aligned with current African and global public health priorities, thereby strengthening its institutional sustainability and long-term financial resilience.
2. To enhance SAA's attractiveness to governments, development partners, donors, and research institutions that increasingly prioritize integrated, cross-cutting, and resilient health approaches over disease-specific vertical programmes.

This strategic evolution could pave the way for ICASA+, an expanded platform that preserves ICASA's historic leadership in HIV/AIDS while embracing broader health priorities that shape Africa's future.

We invite all active SAA members, national and international chapters, partners, researchers, policymakers, and supporters to participate in this important constitutional review process, which is scheduled to begin at the end of July 2026. Together, we can build the next chapter of SAA's leadership and ensure that ICASA+ continues to serve as Africa's premier platform for scientific excellence, policy dialogue, and innovation in health.



INVITATIONAL BID TO HOST THE

25th International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA 2029)



Group Photo of the SAA Executive Board and Board of Trustees. From left (back row): Dr. Aliou Sylla, SAA Treasurer; Dr. Avelin F. Aghokeng, Deputy Secretary General; Prof. Morenike Ukpong, Board Member; Hon. Dr. Richard Nchabi Kamwi, SAA President; and Dr. Benjamin Djoudalbaye, Board Member. Front row: Hon. Dr. David Pagwesese Parirenyatwa, Member, Board of Trustees; Prof. Robert Soudre, Member, Board of Trustees; Dr. Meskerem Bekele-Grunitzky, Member, Board of Trustees; and Prof. Sheila Tlou, Member, Board

The Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), represented by its President; Hon. Dr. Nchabi Richard Kamwi, hereby invites African countries wishing to host the 25th International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa in 2029 (ICASA 2029) to send in their application bid document to the SAA Secretariat in Accra- Ghana. The new closing date for submission of the Application is Friday, 30th October 2026.

ICASA 2029 will be the 25th edition of the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa, to be organised by the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA).

Any African country is eligible to be considered to host ICASA. However, certain criteria must be fulfilled to qualify for selection. The procedure for application is as follows:

Submit Your Bid Document

Provide a detailed application with supporting evidence to the SAA Secretariat

Interested countries should submit a bid document of intent to the SAA Secretariat backed up with detailed proof of evidence of the following information:

1. Strong Government support: financial commitment and political will to host the conference.
 - a. Provide and financially support the Conference venue: Capacity of Plenary rooms: 5000 seats with at least 7 break way rooms with a capacity from 150 to 1500 seats.
 - b. Provide financial support for the local Secretariat working with the International secretariat.
 - c. Provide Scholarships for at least 500 local Participants.
2. Availability of standard hotels to accommodate up to 10,000 participants as well as conference venue(s) with standard conference facilities.
3. Good transportation network within the country.
4. Good telecommunication network within the host country with links to other African countries and international communities.
5. Presence of cohorts of scientific, leadership, civil societies, organised groups of PLHIV, private sector, and youth organisations oriented towards HIV/AIDS-related activities.
6. Easy access by air and by the road where needed.
7. Recognizable presence of Government organ/body responsible for HIV/AIDS coordination in the country.
8. Good security network to guarantee participants' safety.
9. Guarantee easy visa facilities and assistance to conference participants and no restriction to entry for PLHIV, MSM and other minority groups.
10. Political stability.
11. No discriminatory government policies based on gender, HIV status and religion.

The detailed bid document of intent backed up with evidence should reach the Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) Permanent Secretariat both by email, attachments and by courier services to the SAA President:

Society for AIDS in Africa
SAA Permanent Secretariat Accra
P.O. Box 2072
Plot Container 58 Otano Estates,
Behind NHTC, Adjiringanor, East Legon
Mob: (+ 233) 54 37 48 78 1
Office Line: (+ 233) 30 39 36 814
Email: ICASA2029bid@saafrica.org Website: www.saafrica.org
Accra- Ghana

STEP

2

Evaluation & Assessment

SAA reviews all submissions and conducts in-country assessment visits

- a. Submitted applications will be evaluated by Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA) paid members, whereby 2 countries will be pre-selected based on meeting the criteria listed in Step 1.
- b. Assessment visits will be conducted by 3 SAA's Council members to the preselected countries. The pre-selected countries will invite SAA for the two-day assessment visit from 13th November 2026 to 27th November 2026.

Please note:

- I. The pre-selection process will be concluded from 30th November 2026, followed by the notification to the 2 countries.
- II. After SAA Council members' assessment visit and deliberation, the host country of ICASA 2029 will be notified on Friday, 4th December 2026, followed by a press communiqué/release.
- III. Before the final selection of the host country of ICASA 2029 and a notification letter will be sent to the host country, an MOU will be signed between the selected country and Society for AIDS in Africa (SAA), the organiser of ICASA.
- IV. SAA President is ICASA 2029 Chair; the host country will appoint a Co-chair for ICASA 2029 in consultation with SAA. The Council reserves the right to revoke the hosting rights of a country if there are reasonable doubts about its ability to deliver.



THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC
OF BENIN

ICASA⁺ 2027

24TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON AIDS AND STIs IN
AFRICA (ICASA)

5 - 9 DECEMBER 2027

REPUBLIC OF BENIN

#ICASA2027

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