

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 2-DAY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY THE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES, AFE BABALOLA UNIVERSITY, ADO-EKITI, EKITI STATE, NIGERIA, HELD AT ALFA BELGORE HALL, 16TH – 17TH NOVEMBER, 2017 WITH THE THEME: "THE ONE HEALTH APPROACH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN AFRICA"

Overview

The 2-day International Conference had participants from diverse Institutions in Nigeria and outside the country; the conference keynote speakers are Professor Jeffrey Sachs (who could not present via Skype due to technical problems), Professor Tunde Ishola Bewaji, Professor Adekunle Ajayi, Professor Tayo Olajide Babalobi and Prof Samuel Igbatayo.

The opening ceremony, which started at exactly 9:30am, had the presence of over 200 attendees, including the conference presenters, staff and students (both undergraduates and postgraduates) of Afe Babalola University, the media and visitors. It was a robust engagement of intellectuals, scholars, experts and practitioners in the fields of Medical Sciences, Sciences, Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities. A total number of sixty-four (64) papers were scheduled for presentation.

The welcome address was given by the Vice Chancellor of Afe Babalola University, Prof. Michael Ajisafe, who thanked the College of Social and Management Sciences for organising the Conference on One Health and SDGs in Africa, an important area of consideration in the world today. He highlighted the need for the achievement of sustainable development in Africa and finally wished the participants fruitful deliberation. This was followed by an opening remarks by the Provost, College of Social and Management Sciences, Prof. Adeolu Durutoye. In his opening remarks, he explicated on the significance of the conference and the opportunity it offers to scholars to interrogate the goals of Sustainable Development agenda and functional integrated health policy by examining the intricately linked pillars of sustainable development and the tripartite concerns of the One Health Approach.

This was immediately followed by the first Keynote Addresses by Dr. Olutayo O. Babalobi, of the Department of Veterinary Public Health and Preventive Medicine, University of Ibadan. In his address, titled, ‘One Health Approach to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals in Africa: A Review of Complementary Athrozoology of Sociologists and Humanities with Veterinarians’, Dr. Babalobi applied his diverse social background and post-doctoral works on veterinary medicine to illustrate the critical and indispensable role of Social Sciences in activating One Health approach to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa. His work recognised Sociologists as one of the collaborators and partner disciplines needed in the multidisciplinary One Health Approach to handle the world’s health challenges effectively.

In the second Keynote address delivered by Dr. Adekunle Ajayi of the Department of Medicine, Ekiti State University, titled, ‘The Multidisciplinary One Health Approach and the Achievement of the SDGs’, he focused on the interconnectedness between humans and animals due to the continual relationship between man and animals. He argued that because of the linkage between humans and animals, One Health advocates a multidisciplinary approach, since health is linked to all the 17 SDGs. He also explicated on the underlying goals of the SDGs, the burden of health Issues in Africa, which rest on the burden of diseases and the emerging and the re-emerging of infectious diseases in Africa, for example the emergence of Ebola and the re-emergence of Polio in Africa. Dr. Ajayi’s address also centred

on the experiences of One Health in Africa, where he cited the cases of patients in Tanzania with initial diagnosis of malaria that later turned out to be Bacterial zoonoses after laboratory diagnostic testing, and thus the need for diverse approach to treatments of patients. He suggested that in operationalizing One Health in Africa, African countries have to adopt the Rwanda experience, where the country had to take the One Health initiative to Parliament to legalise. In his discussing of the challenges to Implementation of One Health in Africa, many obstacles were identified such as political will, limited collaboration in research, minimum multi-sector engagement, among others. He rounded off by saying that if these challenges are surmounted, Africa will share among other regions, the benefits of One Health, which would largely assist in the achievement of SDGs.

This was followed up by questions and answers, which was presided by the Chairman of that Session, Prof. Kayode-Adedeji. Questions were centred on globalisation and cultural health, animal relationship with humans and implications on health. The opening ceremony and the first plenary Session was concluded at exactly 12:15pm with a 'Vote of Thanks' given by the Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee, Dr. Adeyemi Ademowo. After that, participants proceeded for a tea break. The first day of the Conference, 16th November 2017, covered the Second and Third Plenary Sessions and one Open Session that ended by 4:30pm.

Over the 2-day period, and presentations of sixty-four (64) papers, participants at the Conference:

1. Agreed that health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity
2. Agreed that health encompasses cultural health, economic health, emotional health, financial health, marital health, mental health, physical health, political health, psychological health, social health, spiritual health, and technological health, among others
3. Noted that One Health must involve the collaborative effort of multiple health science professionals, together with other related disciplines in institutions, working locally, nationally and internationally, to attain optimal health for the people
4. Discussed that health is linked to all the 17 SDGs, especially the eradication of poverty
5. Noted that One health and Sustainable Development Goals offer us the opportunity to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and, and secure our planet, while balancing the three dimensions of SDGs.
6. Noted that there is a connection between humans, animals, the ecosystem and the environment
7. Noted that Africa bear great burden of health issues, primarily due to burden of diseases and the emerging as well as the re-emerging of infectious diseases in Africa, such as Polio
8. Stressed the need for multidisciplinary approach to One Health, and an expanded One Health conceptual model for human-animal exposure that accounts for social as well as epidemiologic factors
9. Demonstrated the pivotal role of medical sociology in community engagement for health service delivery and utilisation in the achievement of One Health
10. Recognised that there are challenges to implementation of One Health, and it requires political will and effective collaboration
11. Agreed that within Africa, there are countries making significant strides such as Rwanda, and other African countries can learn lessons of what and how Rwanda made the progress
12. Agreed that climate change is a non-negligible aspect of the One Health Approach; hence, it is important that the United States of America – one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases, remain a party to the Paris Climate Accord.

13. Emphasised the need to combine scientific and extra-scientific views and strategies to achieve the One Health Approach.
14. Stressed the need for governments to take better care of the environment by paying more attention to waste management, protection of cultural heritage sites, afforestation and re-afforestation.
15. Noted that respect for nature, humanity and relationship is vital for achieving One Health in Africa
16. Agreed that child labour has adverse effect on the achievement of SDGs.
17. Recognised that female genital mutilation is an affront to the health and total wellbeing of women and the female child in Africa
18. Recognised that terrorism and violence pose great threats to the achievement of One Health and SDGs in Africa.
19. Recognised that drug addiction and abuse is a challenge to One Health and SDGs.
20. Rejected the degrading of African indigenous knowledge as negligible or unimportant in the attainment of the One Health Approach and SDGs in Africa.
21. Recognised the place of government in the development of traditional health institutions and methods.
22. Agreed that the communication of the One Health Approach and SDGs to people in the grassroots can be done most significantly through community radio.
23. Acknowledged that for health broadcasting to have any meaningful impact, there is the need for African governments to encourage the establishment of community radios.
24. Agreed that sports is vital to the attainment of One Health and SDGs in Africa.
25. Recognised that work needs to be given its dignity, respect and values in Africa.
26. Noted the One Health Approach is vital for our tomorrow

Resolutions/Recommendations

Based on the above observations, participants at the One Health Approach and Sustainable Development Goals in Africa Conference (An International Decade of People of Africa Descent, 2015 – 2024 Event) resolved as follows:

1. There is the need for the creation of a community of practice as a way of promoting One Health through knowledge sharing, knowledge transfer among professionals
2. Educational curriculum should be revised to enhance the teaching of One Health Approach in schools in Africa.
3. That keeping children in school will eradicate child labour.
4. Women's rights should be promoted and protected by African governments, especially in conflict zones.
5. African governments should create clean-air laws that restrict air pollution in the environment.
6. African governments should take affirmative actions towards climate change
7. That indigenous medicine options be made available in public healthcare centres.
8. African indigenous knowledge, belief system and culture must be accorded due respect by governments and people in all ramifications.
9. An all-inclusive approach embracing the involvement of all stakeholders (governments, parents, media and the individuals) is required to eradicate the menace of drug abuse on youth in Africa.

Appreciation

Participants at the One Health Approach and Sustainable Development Goals in Africa International Conference expressed profound gratitude to the College of Social and Management Sciences, ABUAD and the entire Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti for hosting this timely and important conference in the emerging global dynamics that calls for new insights and scholarships on the SDGs and One Health.

Adeyemi J. Ademowo, PhD (Ibadan)

Chairman, Local Organizing Committee