

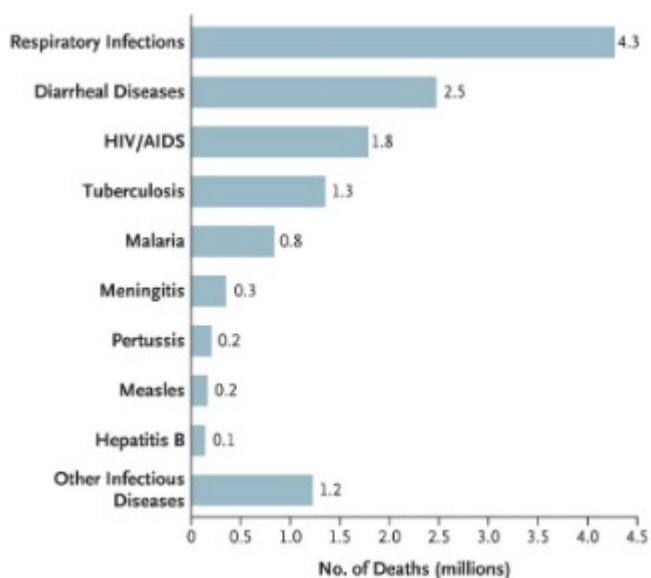
Africa is on the right track to roll out new measures to catalyze innovation and scientific research but experts emphasize the need to further focus on key projects that focus on projects working towards sustainable healthcare systems.

One important way to improve public health across Africa, according to experts is to increase local manufacturing of medications and diagnostics while boosting the public health workforce at the same time.

Speaking Monday on the sidelines of the annual [International Conference on Public Health in Africa \(CPHIA\)](#) currently taking place in Lusaka, Zambia, Prof. Senait Fisseha, CPHIA 2023 Co-Chair; Vice President of Global Programs, Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation (STBF), highlighted the need to further take forward the scientific research to generate new knowledge in the health sector.

During the opening ceremony, speakers reflected on how African countries have shown extraordinary resilience in the face of recent disease outbreaks, including Ebola, cholera, malaria and COVID-19. Estimates by health experts indicate that the continent is still facing a significant burden of disease.

Apart from illnesses, such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, which contribute to an annual loss of over 227 million healthy life years, with an economic cost exceeding \$800 billion, Dr. Jean Kaseya, Director General, [Africa CDC](#) told delegates that Africa faces over 100 disease outbreaks every year, translating to an average of 2 outbreaks a week.



## ***Top killer diseases in Africa (WHO)***

Latest official reports indicate that the top killers in Africa remain acute respiratory infections, HIV/AIDS, diarrhea, malaria, and tuberculosis, collectively accounting for 80% of the infectious disease burden, claiming over 6 million lives each year.

At time, the outbreaks of diseases like monkeypox and Lassa fever are posing serious threats to the already overburdened health systems and our economies, Dr Kaseya suggested that supporting [African Union] Member States to build agile and efficient response mechanisms is a critical step to collectively repositioning Africa in the global health architecture.

On local manufacturing of vaccines, diagnostics, therapeutics and other health products – the top AU health official pointed out the continent is i the driver’s seat to advance home-grown solutions.

Among some of these initiatives include [PAVM \(the Partnership for African Vaccine Manufacturing\)](#) where stakeholders in health sectors are working to advance vaccine production from 1% currently to 60% by 2040.

Moreover, thanks to [the Africa Collaborative Initiative to Advance Diagnostics \(AFCAD\)](#) countries are collaboratively working to increase access to quality diagnostics towards the achievement of universal health coverage in Africa, according to the same source.

“This greater autonomy is essential to reducing the inequalities we’ve faced historically, including with the recent rollout of COVID-19 vaccines. We must continue investing in this innovation and production,” Dr Kaseya told delegates.



***Delegates at the annual International Conference on Public Health in Africa (CPHIA 2023). Organizers say the event provides a unique African-led platform for leaders across the continent to reflect on lessons learned in health and science***

CPHIA 2023 is expected to feature nine plenary sessions, 14 parallel sessions, nine abstract-driven sessions, according to the organizers.