



The Thousand Faces of Biosafety in Laboratory Medicine

ASLM2021 Symposium 2

Co-conveners

- **Talkmore Maruta**, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention; African Society for Laboratory Medicine
- **Maureen Ellis**, International Federation of Biosafety Associations

Summary

The WHO Joint External Evaluations conducted by African Union member states demonstrated weak biosafety and biosecurity capacities that threaten safe and effective laboratory medicine and response to disease outbreaks. The face of biosafety in laboratory medicine is multi-faceted as risks to healthcare workers and laboratory professionals are present from specimen collection to sample transportation, processing, storage, and disposal. Successful approaches and solutions require the meaningful participation of a broad range of stakeholders, from bench technicians on the frontlines to policy and decision makers at the national level.

In 2019, the Africa CDC, in collaboration with its Regional Collaborating Centres, initiated the process of identifying priorities and sustainable solutions required to fill gaps and promote measurable progress towards strengthening biosafety and biosecurity in AU Member States. Key areas highlighted as an immediate priority in African countries include:

- Multi-sectoral development of biosafety/biosecurity policies and legal frameworks
- Increased training and technical competency in managing biological risks and implementing sustainable risk-based approaches
- Ensuring laboratory practices and infrastructure meet minimum standards for the safe management and disposal of biological materials and other hazards

Learning Objectives

This symposium seeks to:

- Highlight the new WHO Laboratory Biosafety Manual and current risk-based approaches to managing biosafety and biosecurity risks
- Explore solutions for safely scaling up COVID-19 diagnostic testing at the local level

- Present an example of multi-sectoral coordination and collaboration at the national level in addressing biosafety challenges
- Better understand strategies for managing biomedical and other hazardous wastes

Session Programme

Presenter & Affiliation	Title
Talkmore Maruta (Africa CDC)	Welcome, introduction and opening remarks
Kazunobu Kojima (WHO)	Implementing the new WHO Biosafety Manual for risk-based sustainable solutions at the country level
James Marcomic Maragia (Country Medical Laboratory Coordinator, Tukana County, Ministry Health & Sanitation, Kenya)	Biosafety considerations for scaling up COVID-19 diagnostic testing at point-of-care and in laboratories
Abe Abias (NPHL MoH South Sudan) John Ding (Biosafety Biosecurity Association of South Sudan)	A multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach to championing biosafety in South Sudan
David Bressler (US CDC ILB TBD)	More testing means more waste: managing GTC containing liquid waste from molecular labs
All session participants	Question/Answer panel discussion
Maureen Ellis (IFBA)	Summary and closing remarks