

EPILEPSY IN AFRICA

CALL TO ACTION

This Call to Action for accelerated action to defeat epilepsy on the African continent was made by a forum of persons with epilepsy, their families and professionals working in the area of epilepsy in Africa and Epilepsy Africa Alliance (EAA).

COGNISANT OF:

1. ongoing the efforts by governments in Africa, persons with epilepsy, their associations, professional groups and funders.
2. the Global Campaign Against Epilepsy (1997-2009) led by World Health Organization (WHO), International League against Epilepsy (ILAE) and International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) that resulted in the African Declaration on Epilepsy made in Dakar, Senegal, Africa in 2000; demonstration projects in Zimbabwe and Senegal between 1999-2005; and the Epilepsy in the WHO Africa Region Bridging the Gap Report, 2004.
3. efforts by the IBE, ILAE and WHO that include formation of regional committees; the African Epilepsy Congress since 2012; the International Epilepsy Day; Global Outreach Program demonstration projects in Mozambique and Ghana; WHA68.20 Resolution on Epilepsy, 2015; and the Global Epilepsy Report, 2019.

CONSIDERING THAT:

4. epilepsy is the most common serious chronic brain disorder, estimated to affect 10 million people in Africa,
5. epilepsy does not receive adequate attention in existing national health and social development plans,
6. all people with epilepsy can be effectively and inexpensively treated yet 75% of people with epilepsy in Africa have no access to healthcare and are not appropriately treated,
7. general information about epilepsy, trained primary health nurses, trained doctors, diagnostic facilities, antiepileptic drugs and surgery are not available to - or affordable by - the majority of people with epilepsy,
8. beliefs in supernatural causes and treatment of epilepsy in Africa contribute to the under-utilization of the medical health services, to discrimination and social isolation,
9. in Africa preventable causes of epilepsy are more frequent than elsewhere, including infectious diseases, head trauma, insufficient perinatal care and consanguinity,
10. most people with epilepsy do not have access to quality education, social assistance, income, employment and justice.

11. persons with epilepsy, particularly women, suffer gender-based violence, sexual and domestic violence given their condition and there are limited protection mechanisms.

WE CALL UPON:

12. Every government to develop a national plan for epilepsy to:

- a. address the multiple needs of people with epilepsy, including but not limited to access to trained personnel, antiepileptic medication, information, age-appropriate social assistance, quality education, safety, security and access to justice.
- b. educate and train health and social care professionals about epilepsy,
- c. educate the general public about epilepsy as a universal neurological, non-communicable and treatable condition,
- d. eliminate stigma and discrimination in all spheres of life, particularly in villages, at school and the work place,
- e. encourage incorporation of prevention and treatment of epilepsy in national plans for other relevant health issues,
- f. encourage the public, private sectors and NGO's to get involved,
- g. promote interaction with natural, traditional or indigenous health systems,
- h. encourage basic and applied research on epilepsy,
- i. support International Epilepsy Day,
- j. encourage a continental action plan led by the African Union and WHO-Afro and supported by regional bodies.

13. Partners to:

- a. support national, regional and continental plans,
- b. support International Epilepsy Day,
- c. support capacity building of associations, advocates, researchers, professionals and professional groups.

14. Persons with epilepsy and epilepsy advocates to:

- a. advocate for development, funding and implementation of national plans for epilepsy,
- b. accelerated action to improve and sustain epilepsy services.

Entebbe, Uganda 23rd August 2019, Revised 10 June 2020

This call is available in African languages. If you are able to translate for us to any local language, please let us know.

Epilepsy Alliance
africa



Muungano wa Kifafa Afrika

Alliance Afrique pour l'épilepsie

تحالف الصرع الأفريقي

Epilepsia áfrica aliança