The 76th ECSA Health Ministers Conference (HMC)- Theme: Enhancing Health Systems for Equity, Resilience and Sustainability

Introduction

The East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community 76th Health Ministers Conference (HMC) was held from February 3rd - 5th, 2026, at the Happy Valley Hotel, in Ezulwini, Eswatini, under the theme: "Enhancing Health Systems for Equity, Resilience and Sustainability" This year's conference marked a pivotal moment for sharing aspirations and priorities as a region. It provided a platform for regional dialogue, collaboration, and the sharing of best practices, with an emphasis on advancing universal health coverage (UHC), strengthening health systems, promoting health equity, and enhancing resilience to future health challenges. The conference brought together governments, development partners, and other stakeholders to discuss innovative solutions and secure commitments to improve health outcomes across the health community. The meeting was held under the following sub-themes:

- The ECSA region heath status report: Celebrating progress and addressing the challenges
- Sub-theme 1: Achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) through sustainable health financing
- Sub-theme 2: Building capacity on health emergencies, response and resilience
- Sub-theme 3: Advancing Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH)
- Sub-theme 4: Enhancing regional data integration
- Sub-theme 5: Addressing Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and Mental Health
- Sub-theme 6: Capacity Building and Health Workforce Development
- Sub-theme 7: Addressing infectious diseases and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)
- Sub-theme 8: Driving innovation and resilience for health security
- Sub-theme 9: Engagement with partners in driving the regional health agenda

The HMC was officially opened by the Right Honourable Deputy Prime Minister, Her Excellency Thulisile Dladla. In her keynote address, the Right Honourable Deputy Prime Minister emphasized that diseases know no boundaries, making regional health security a shared responsibility. She highlighted the need for enhanced cross-border collaboration in disease surveillance, outbreak response, and emergency preparedness. She called for continued prioritization of strengthening of resilient health systems that can effectively respond to emergencies, improve maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health, address the growing burden of non-communicable diseases alongside communicable diseases, and accelerate progress towards universal health coverage. She emphasized on efforts to sustain investment in the regions health workforce, robust primary health care systems, reliable health information systems, and local manufacturing capacity for medicines, vaccines, and diagnostics.

She further emphasised the importance of exploring innovative and sustainable financing mechanisms, fostering regional collaboration, and harnessing digital and technological solutions to improve efficiency, accountability, and impact.

A platform for reflection and progress

The 76th HMC provided a platform for Member States, the ECSA-HC Secretariat, and partners to reflect on the health challenges in the region, assess progress and chart a wayforward.

Moving forward: The resolutions

At the end of the conference, the health Ministers considered and passed the following resolutions:

1. **ECSA/HMC76/R1**: Accelerating Innovative Health Financing for Sustainability in the ECSA Region
2. **ECSA/HMC76/R2**: Progress on building capacity on health emergencies, response, and resilience in the region
3. **ECSA/HMC76/R3**: Promoting well-being and Sexual and Reproductive Health of adolescents and young people to achieve Demographic Dividend, in the ECSA-HC Region
4. **ECSA/HMC76/R4**: Strengthening Regional Health Data Integration, Interoperability and Digital Governance in the ECSA Region
5. **ECSA/HMC76/R5**: Tackling Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)
6. **ECSA/HMC76/R6**: Enhancing leadership, governance and human resources for health
7. **ECSA/HMC76/R7**: Progress in responding to Communicable Diseases and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in the ECSA Region
8. **ECSA/HMC76/R8**: Driving Innovation and Resilience: Local Manufacturing for Health Security
9. **ECSA/HMC76/R9**: Expression of Gratitude to Partners of the ECSA Health Community
10. **ECSA/HMC76/R10**: Expression of Gratitude to the Government and People of the Kingdom of Eswatini

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Delegates at the 76th Health Ministers Conference

Meeting Participants

A total of 292 participants attended the 76th HMC, reflecting broad regional and global representation. Delegates comprised ECSA Member States, non-member states, regional professional colleges, and partner institutions, including multilateral bodies and United Nations agencies such as the World Health Organization **(Table 1)**. This diverse participation highlights strong multi-sectoral collaboration in advancing health systems strengthening, Universal Health Coverage, and regional health security.

The 76th HMC reaffirmed the collective commitment of ECSA Member States and partners to advancing equitable, resilient, and sustainable health systems. The proceedings underscore the importance of sustained investment, innovation, and regional cooperation in addressing current and emerging health challenges. The adopted resolutions provide a clear policy direction and a foundation for coordinated action toward achieving Universal Health Coverage and improved health outcomes across the region.

TABLE 1: PARTICIPATION SUMMARY: 76TH EAST, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN AFRICA HEALTH COMMUNITY HEALTH MINISTERS CONFERENCE

Category	Delegates Details
Member States	Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Non-Member States	Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan
College of Health Sciences	COSECSA, ECSACOP, ECSACOG, COECSA, ECSACONM
Multilateral & Intergovernmental	Africa CDC; SADC; EAC; COMESA; AUDA-NEPAD
UN & Related Agencies	WHO; UNICEF; UNFPA; UNAIDS; World Bank
NGOs & Foundations	JMK Foundation; CHAI; EGPAF; Jhpiego; FP2030; World Vision; Living Goods; CEHURD; THPS; BMF; We Care Solar; Axum; PATH; HST; ReAct Africa; Mercy Ships
Academia & Research	Ifakara Health Institute; APHRC; ACTS; MUHAS; University of Dar es Salaam; University of Zimbabwe; University of Malawi; University of Mauritius; University of Memphis; UHNM NHS Trust; KCMC; Africa Clinical Research Network
Public Health & Networks	NERCHA; KNPHI; CPSB Kenya; ALMA; CPA
Private Sector	South Africa Mining Association; Delf Imaging; Persown Connect; TNT Kenya
Civil Society	Afya na Haki; ECHO-Africa; Africa Foundation First