

Highlights from the 36th MeLSAT Scientific Conference and Exhibition and Annual General Meeting 2023

By Haji Liputi

Tanzania Medical Laboratory Scientist's Association (MeLSAT) organized its 36th Scientific Conference, Exhibitions, and Annual General Meeting 2023. The event took place at the prestigious J.K. Nyerere Hall located within campus of Moshi Co-operative University, Kilimanjaro region. Location provided a suitable venue for the conference, ensuring a comfortable and conducive environment for discussions and presentations.

This event took place over four consecutive days, from October 26th to 29th September 2023 and remarked as most significant gathering in the field of medical laboratory profession in Tanzania and East Africa at large. The event brought together a diverse array of delegates from both within Tanzania and from beyond the country's borders. The central theme of the conference revolved around **"Quality and Reliable Laboratory Results in Relation to Universal Health Coverage."**

Keynote Speakers

The conference featured three distinguished keynote speakers, each addressing vital topics in the field of Medical Laboratory Science, these speakers were;

1. Dr. Balthazar Nyombi (*Senior Lecturer-KCMUCo*)

Dr. Nyombi presented on the global concern of antimicrobial resistance. His presentation shed light on the challenges posed by the increasing resistance of pathogens to antimicrobial treatments and its implications for public health.

2. Mr. Ambele Mwafulango (*Laboratory Manager-National Public Health Laboratory*)

Mr. Mwafulango delivered a presentation on emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases. His insights helped conference attendees understand the dynamic nature of infectious diseases and the strategies needed to combat them effectively.

3. Mr. Shaban R. Mziray (*Senior Laboratory & Research Scientist in Microbial Genomics-Kibong'oto Public Health Laboratory*)

Mr. Mziray's presentation focused on the application of metagenomics in detecting pathogens. This showcased the cutting-edge technologies and techniques used in contemporary medical laboratories to identify disease-causing agents

Scientific Presentations

In addition to the keynote speakers, the conference hosted a total of 32 speakers who presented their abstract papers. Each speaker was allotted 10 minutes to present their research findings and insights. After each presentation, a question and answer (Q&A) session were followed that provided an opportunity for in-depth discussions and knowledge sharing among the participants.

Exhibitors

The conference featured an exhibitions booth where various companies and organizations showcased their services and products to the conference delegates. Exhibitors included notable companies such as INQABA BIOTEC, ANUDHA LTD, ACTION MEDIOR, SCIEX, MALULU COMPANY LTD, HEALTH AND SAFETY TANZANIA LTD, CROWN HEALTHCARE (T), KAS MEDICS LTD, SANDMEDICS COMPANY LTD, and PHOMAS DIAGNOSTICS. These exhibitions allowed attendees to explore the latest advancements in laboratory equipment, technologies, and services.

Guest of Honor

The guest of honor was Dr. Godwin Mollel, the Deputy Minister of Health, who graciously represented Hon. Ummu Mwalimu, the Minister of Health. In his capacity as the guest of honor, Dr. Mollel expressed the heartfelt appreciation of the government for the exceptional commitment and sacrifices made by medical laboratory professionals across the nation. He recognized their pivotal role in contributing to the well-being and health of Tanzanians, highlighting the essential nature of their work in the healthcare system.

Dr. Mollel's presence at the conference was not merely ceremonial but carried a commitment to address the challenges facing the medical laboratory profession. These concerns were raised by Mr. Yahya Mnung'a, President of MeLSAT, who spoke on behalf of all medical laboratory practitioners.

Some of the key challenges brought to the government's attention included inadequate employment opportunities within the field, the need for improvements in administration and leadership structures within laboratory settings, and the necessity for uniformity in undergraduate studies for medical laboratory science.

In response to these issues, Dr. Mollel promised to work towards resolving the challenges and improving the conditions for medical laboratory professionals. His commitment to finding solutions to these issues reflects the government's recognition of the importance of this profession and its dedication to enhancing the healthcare sector in Tanzania. The government's willingness to address these challenges underscores its support for the continued growth and development of medical laboratory science in the country

MeLSAT Annual General Meeting

As part of MeLSAT's annual routine, the Annual General Meeting served as a platform for members to discuss the association's progress, challenges, and future goals. MeLSAT members had the chance to review the association's executive and financial reports, followed by discussions on strategies to increase association's revenues and its efficiency.

Conclusion

The 36th MeLSAT Scientific Conference and Exhibition was a significant and knowledge-rich event, offering a platform for professionals and experts in the field of medical laboratory science to share insights, innovations, and research findings.

The conference's theme emphasized the importance of quality and reliable laboratory results in the context of universal health coverage, reflecting the commitment to improving healthcare standards in Tanzania and beyond.