

MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENTISTS ASSOCIATION OF TANZANIA
(MeLSAT)



**REPORT ON THE 39TH SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE, EXHIBITION AND ANNUAL
GENERAL MEETING 2026**

Theme: Investing in Laboratory Science and Technology for Quality and Sustainable
Laboratory Services

1.0 Executive Summary

The Medical Laboratory Scientists Association of Tanzania (MeLSAT) held its 39th Scientific Conference, Exhibition and Annual General Meeting from 22 to 25 September 2026 at City Park Garden, Mbeya, Tanzania. The conference brought together laboratory professionals, researchers, healthcare stakeholders, exhibitors and representatives from relevant institutions to exchange scientific knowledge, discuss professional challenges and explore strategies for improving the quality and sustainability of laboratory services.

The conference theme, ***“Investing in Laboratory Science and Technology for Quality and Sustainable Laboratory Services,”*** emphasized the importance of investment in human resources, modern diagnostic technologies, quality management systems, research, innovation and sustainable laboratory infrastructure.

The programme included scientific presentations, professional discussions, exhibitions, regulatory updates and the Annual General Meeting. Key topics included non-communicable diseases, biosafety and biosecurity, antimicrobial resistance, laboratory-based disease surveillance, diagnostic technology, Laboratory Quality Management and accreditation preparedness.

The conference was also significant because it marked **45 years since MeLSAT was established in 1981**. The presence of the Deputy Minister of Health, Hon. Dr. Florence George Samizi (MP), highlighted the importance of collaboration between government, professional associations and industry in strengthening laboratory services.

Overall, the conference provided a platform for professional development, scientific exchange, stakeholder engagement and reflection on the future of medical laboratory science in Tanzania.

2.0 Background

Medical laboratory services play a critical role in disease diagnosis, treatment monitoring, public health surveillance and disease prevention. Reliable laboratory results support clinical decision-making and contribute to improved patient outcomes.

Recognizing this importance, MeLSAT convenes scientific conferences to promote professional development, disseminate research findings, encourage innovation and strengthen collaboration among laboratory professionals and other healthcare stakeholders.

The 39th conference was organized under the theme of investing in laboratory science and technology to promote quality and sustainable laboratory services. It also provided an opportunity to reflect on the Association's 45-year contribution to the development of the medical laboratory profession in Tanzania.

3.0 Objectives of the Conference

The conference aimed to:

1. Provide a platform for sharing scientific research, innovations and emerging developments in medical laboratory science.
2. Discuss challenges affecting laboratory professionals, including workforce shortages, professional development and working conditions.
3. Promote collaboration among laboratory professionals, government institutions, researchers, industry and development partners.
4. Showcase diagnostic technologies, equipment, reagents and other solutions that support laboratory service delivery.
5. Strengthen MeLSAT governance, membership participation and professional representation through the Annual General Meeting.

4.0 Conference Proceedings

4.1 Day One: Scientific Presentations and Public Health Priorities

The first day featured scientific presentations and discussions on the role of laboratory services in the early detection and monitoring of non-communicable diseases, biosafety and biosecurity, culture and antimicrobial susceptibility testing, and laboratory-based disease surveillance.

Participants discussed the importance of improving access to diagnostic services, ensuring the availability of reagents, strengthening laboratory risk management and promoting appropriate biosafety practices. Discussions also highlighted the role of microbiology services, community engagement and the One Health approach in disease prevention and outbreak preparedness.

Scientific presentations covered areas including integrated diagnostics for non-communicable disease comorbidities among people living with HIV, anaemia among HIV-infected children, sustaining ISO 15189 accreditation, Candida infections among high-risk patients and antimicrobial resistance surveillance.

The exhibition sessions provided opportunities for participants to interact with companies presenting laboratory technologies, diagnostic equipment and electronic quality management solutions.

4.2 Day Two: Continued Scientific Exchange and Industry Engagement

The second day continued the scientific and professional programme, providing opportunities for participants to exchange knowledge, discuss laboratory practice and engage with exhibitors. Discussions across the conference emphasized the need to translate scientific evidence into practical improvements in diagnostic services. Important areas included laboratory quality, technology adoption, professional development, reliable diagnostic supplies and the sustainability of laboratory operations.

The exhibition programme also strengthened engagement between laboratory professionals and industry representatives, enabling participants to explore available technologies and potential solutions to challenges encountered in laboratory settings.

4.3 Day Three: Scientific Research and Government Engagement

The third day featured additional scientific presentations covering diagnostic practice, infectious diseases, chronic conditions, laboratory quality management and public health.

Presentations addressed topics including biotechnology, liver health monitoring among patients with sickle cell disease, turnaround time in blood donor screening, investigations involving *Pseudomonas* and *Klebsiella*, quality management and accreditation, and pneumococcal vaccine correlates of protection among adults living with HIV.

The programme also included an official ceremony attended by the Deputy Minister of Health, Hon. Dr. Florence George Samizi (MP).

4.3.1 Address by the MeLSAT President

The MeLSAT President highlighted issues affecting the medical laboratory profession and called for continued collaboration among the Association, government and other stakeholders. Key concerns included the shortage of laboratory professionals, scheme of service, professional development, remuneration and the need to ensure that laboratory testing is performed by appropriately qualified and competent personnel.

The address emphasized the importance of strengthening professional representation, improving working conditions and promoting quality laboratory services.

4.3.2 Address by the Guest of Honour

The Deputy Minister of Health, Hon. Dr. Florence George Samizi (MP), emphasized the critical role of medical laboratory services in accurate diagnosis, disease monitoring and the control of diseases.

She acknowledged the shortage of health professionals, including laboratory personnel, and explained that government recruitment depends on approved staffing needs and the availability of financial resources.

The Deputy Minister underscored the importance of laboratory accreditation against recognized international standards to strengthen quality management systems and ensure that laboratory results are accurate, reliable and comparable.

She encouraged laboratory professionals to participate in the “**IJUE NAMBA YAKO**” campaign by promoting public awareness and encouraging people to undergo health screening for early detection of diseases.

She also called on relevant leaders and regulatory authorities to ensure that laboratory testing is conducted by appropriately qualified and competent personnel in accordance with professional requirements and applicable standards.

On investment in the health sector, the Deputy Minister encouraged stakeholders to support local production of medical devices, medicines and diagnostic supplies. She reported that more than 400 acres had been allocated for factories producing medical devices and medicines, highlighting opportunities to strengthen domestic manufacturing.

During the conference, she toured exhibition booths displaying laboratory reagents, medical devices and diagnostic technologies. The visit provided an opportunity to engage with exhibitors and appreciate innovations available to support laboratory service delivery.

Her address reinforced the importance of government–professional association collaboration, quality assurance, local investment and professional accountability in strengthening laboratory services.

4.4 Day Four: Professional Regulation and Annual General Meeting

The fourth day included scientific and professional sessions, with presentations covering biotechnology, laboratory techniques and regulatory issues.

The programme included a presentation by the Private Health Laboratories Board (PHLB) on laboratory regulation and licensing, alongside other technical presentations and professional discussions.

The Annual General Meeting provided a forum for members to discuss the Association's governance, proposed constitutional amendments and matters affecting its future direction.

The AGM was an important component of the conference because it enabled members to participate in the Association's decision-making processes and discuss priorities for professional development and organizational strengthening.

The approved resolutions, constitutional amendments and election outcomes should be documented in accordance with the official AGM minutes.

5.0 Exhibition and Stakeholder Participation

The exhibition was an important component of the conference, providing a platform for companies and organizations to showcase laboratory reagents, diagnostic equipment, medical devices and laboratory technologies.

Participants interacted with exhibitors to learn about emerging technologies and solutions that could improve diagnostic quality, operational efficiency and quality management.

The exhibition also encouraged networking and potential collaboration between laboratory professionals, suppliers, manufacturers and other stakeholders. Discussions on local manufacturing highlighted the importance of developing sustainable supply chains and increasing access to essential diagnostic products.

6.0 Celebration of 45 Years of MeLSAT

The conference marked 45 years since MeLSAT was established in 1981. The anniversary celebrated the Association's history, achievements and contribution to the development of medical laboratory science in Tanzania.

It also provided an opportunity to recognize the efforts of professionals and stakeholders who have contributed to the growth of the Association and the advancement of the profession.

The anniversary reinforced the need to preserve the Association's legacy while investing in scientific innovation, professional development, ethical practice and sustainable laboratory services.

7.0 Achievements

The 39th MeLSAT Conference, held from 22–25 September 2026 in Mbeya, achieved the following key milestones:

1. **Scientific Knowledge Exchange:** Facilitated the presentation of research findings, sharing of professional experiences and discussion of emerging developments in medical laboratory science.
2. **Enhanced Delegate Participation:** Promoted active engagement through interactive question-and-answer sessions following scientific presentations and keynote speeches, fostering collaborative learning and knowledge sharing.
3. **Promotion of Laboratory Quality:** Strengthened awareness of quality management systems, ISO 15189 accreditation, diagnostic accuracy and compliance with professional standards.
4. **Industry and Technology Engagement:** Connected laboratory professionals with exhibitors showcasing diagnostic equipment, reagents, medical devices and innovative laboratory technologies.
5. **Government Engagement and Advocacy:** Provided a platform to address workforce shortages, professional standards, laboratory accreditation and investment in local production of medical devices and medicines.
6. **Professional Networking and Collaboration:** Strengthened interaction among laboratory professionals, researchers, government representatives, exhibitors and other healthcare stakeholders.
7. **Strengthened Association Governance:** Provided a forum for members to discuss organizational matters and the future direction of MeLSAT through the Annual General Meeting.
8. **Celebration of 45 Years of MeLSAT:** Commemorated the Association's establishment in 1981, recognizing its contribution to the advancement of medical laboratory science in Tanzania.

8.0 Key Issues Identified

The following priorities emerged from the scientific presentations and professional discussions:

- **Human resources:** Addressing shortages of laboratory professionals and strengthening training and continuous professional development.
- **Quality management:** Strengthening laboratory quality management systems and supporting accreditation in accordance with recognized standards.
- **Diagnostic technology:** Improving access to suitable diagnostic equipment, modern testing platforms and technical support.

- **Supply chain management:** Ensuring reliable availability of reagents, consumables and other essential laboratory supplies.
- **Biosafety and biosecurity:** Improving risk assessment, infection prevention and control, access control and biosafety practices.
- **Research and surveillance:** Promoting scientific research, antimicrobial resistance surveillance and laboratory preparedness for public health emergencies.
- **Professional standards:** Ensuring that laboratory testing is performed by qualified and competent personnel in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements.
- **Public health awareness:** Supporting early screening and preventive health initiatives, including the “IJUE NAMBA YAKO” campaign.
- **Local manufacturing:** Encouraging investment in domestic production of medical devices, medicines and diagnostic supplies.
- **Professional collaboration:** Strengthening partnerships among MeLSAT, government, industry, research institutions and other healthcare stakeholders.

9.0 Recommendations

Based on the issues discussed during the conference, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. MeLSAT should continue advocating for adequate staffing, improved working conditions and professional development opportunities for laboratory professionals.
2. Laboratory facilities should strengthen implementation of quality management systems and pursue accreditation in accordance with applicable standards.
3. Relevant authorities and stakeholders should improve the availability of essential reagents, consumables, equipment and maintenance services.
4. Laboratory professionals should receive continued training in biosafety, biosecurity, quality assurance, diagnostic technology and disease surveillance.
5. Government and industry should strengthen collaboration to support local manufacturing and sustainable access to laboratory supplies.
6. MeLSAT should continue promoting research, scientific publication and the application of research findings in laboratory practice.
7. Professional and regulatory authorities should reinforce compliance with qualification, competence and licensing requirements for laboratory testing.
8. Laboratory professionals should support public health campaigns that promote early screening and timely diagnosis.

9. MeLSAT should strengthen membership engagement, stakeholder partnerships and follow-up on resolutions adopted during the Annual General Meeting.
10. The Association should maintain an official record of conference proceedings, resolutions and action points to support accountability and implementation.

10.0 Conclusion

The 39th MeLSAT Scientific Conference, Exhibition and Annual General Meeting 2026 provided an important platform for scientific learning, professional engagement, technology exchange and discussion of priorities for strengthening laboratory services in Tanzania.

The conference highlighted the importance of investing in human resources, modern diagnostic technologies, quality management systems, research, accreditation and sustainable supply chains. The participation of the Deputy Minister of Health reinforced the need for collaboration between government, professional associations and industry to address workforce challenges, strengthen professional standards and promote local production of medical devices and diagnostic supplies.

The exhibition enabled participants to engage with suppliers and technology providers, while the Annual General Meeting provided an opportunity for members to discuss the governance and future direction of MeLSAT.

The celebration of 45 years since the establishment of MeLSAT in 1981 added historical significance to the event and reaffirmed the Association's commitment to advancing medical laboratory science.

The conference concluded with a renewed call for collective action to strengthen professional capacity, improve laboratory quality and promote accessible, reliable and sustainable laboratory services for better healthcare outcomes in Tanzania.

10.0 Acknowledgement

MeLSAT acknowledges the contributions of the government, conference participants, presenters, exhibitors, sponsors, partners, organizing committees and all stakeholders whose participation supported the conference.

Their continued commitment to scientific advancement, professional development and quality laboratory services remains essential to the growth of the medical laboratory profession in Tanzania.

Prepared by

Peter Mwevila

For General Secretary