

Breakfast Session at the Global Health Security 2026 Conference - Convened by the West African Health Organisation (WAHO)

Date: Wednesday, 10th June 2026

Venue: Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, Malaysia

Time: 7:00 am to 8:00 am

Topic: Lessons from Lassa Fever for Regional Health Security in Africa

This session will reflect on West Africa's experience with Lassa fever vaccine development and preparedness, highlighting how the region is building and coordinating capabilities across clinical trials, manufacturing readiness, access planning, financing, governance and resilience.

Anchored in the work of the Lassa Fever Vaccine Coalition and the Regional End-to-End (E2E) Access Roadmap, the discussion moves beyond a single disease to ask a broader question: what has Lassa taught the region about developing durable, region-led health security systems?

Designed for researchers, scientists, policymakers, and implementers, the session focuses on West African leadership and reflects on the successes, challenges and adaptations involved in building regional trial networks, regional manufacturing pathways and implementing access strategies. These lessons offer practical insights for strengthening preparedness and response for future epidemic threats across the region.

Focus

The session will focus on capability-building as a regional project, using Lassa fever as a concrete case study including:

- Clinical trial readiness and coordination: lessons from establishing and sustaining trial sites, regulatory alignment, ethics review processes and research governance across countries.
- Manufacturing and supply readiness: what Lassa reveals about the realities of building manufacturing pathways, technology partnerships and long-term ecosystem readiness rather than short-term production targets.
- Access planning and delivery: how early access planning, demand forecasting and integration with national and regional health systems shape equity and speed.
- Regional coordination and governance: the role of regional institutions in aligning countries, buffering political and funding volatility, and stewarding collective priorities.

Expected outcomes

- **Positioning of Lassa as a pathway to broader regional preparedness**- a shared understanding of how lessons from Lassa can inform a wider regional preparedness agenda, with concrete linkages across clinical trials, manufacturing, regulatory systems, and access planning.
- **Reinforced commitment to region-led ownership and coordination** -stronger alignment among governments, researchers, and regional institutions on leading and sustaining preparedness efforts, with clarity on the role of regional governance in driving long-term resilience and reducing dependency.
- **Expanded role of the Lassa Coalition as a regional preparedness platform**
Agreement on how the Coalition can evolve beyond Lassa to support coordinated preparedness for other priority pathogens, leveraging its existing structures for partnership-building and system strengthening.

Format (60 minutes)

The session will focus on capability-building as a regional project, using Lassa fever as a concrete case study including:

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| Welcome/Introduction | 5 minutes | Opening and setting the scene for the session | Moderator: <i>Ms Vivianne Ihekweazu</i> Managing Director, Nigeria Health Watch |
| Opening: Framing the Regional Lessons | 10 minutes | Opening remarks situating Lassa within regional health security priorities and why these lessons matter now | <i>Dr. Melchior Athanase Joël C. AISSI</i> DG WAHO <i>Dr. Claire J Standley</i> Senior Lead for Biosecurity Initiatives, CEPI |
| Panel Discussion: Building Regional Capability in Practice | 30 minutes | The session will focus on capability-building as a regional project, using Lassa fever as a concrete case study including | Moderator: <i>Ms Vivianne Ihekweazu</i> Managing Director, Nigeria Health Watch |

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| | | <p>A representative from the Lassa Fever Vaccine Coalition (Country taskforces) on lessons from integrating science, preparedness, and access planning</p> <p>A West African research leader from West Africa on lessons from building and sustaining trial sites and research ecosystems in West Africa</p> <p>A senior representative from WAHO on political coordination and institutional stewardship</p> <p>A global partner on how global support can reinforce, rather than fragment, regional capability-building</p> | <p><i>Dr Kemi Ladeinde</i> Secretariat Coordinator, Nigeria Taskforce</p> <p><i>Dr Donald Grant</i> District Medical Officer, Kenema Government Hospital, Sierra Leone</p> <p><i>Dr. Virgil Lokossou</i> Director of the Health Care Services, WAHO</p> <p><i>Dr. Claire J Standley</i> Senior Lead for Biosecurity Initiatives, CEPI</p> |
| Q & A | 10 minutes | | All |
| Closing reflections | 5 minutes | | <i>Dr. Melchior Athanase Joël C. AISSI</i> DG WAHO |