



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

1. WHAT IS AFRICAN VOICES OF SCIENCE?

African Voices of Science (AVoS) is a continental initiative powered by Speak Up Africa to strengthen Africa's voice and leadership in global health research, development, and innovation (RD&I). Established in 2020, AVoS brings together leading scientists, researchers, and policy advocates from across the continent to amplify African perspectives, influence policy, and drive investment in African-led health solutions. By elevating African expertise in global health discussions, AVoS seeks to improve health outcomes, bolster Africa's health security, and unlock the continent's vast economic potential in the health sector.

2. WHO ARE THE AFRICAN VOICES OF SCIENCE?





DR. RAYMONDE GOUDOU COFFIE *Minister, Governor of the Autonomous District of Lacs*



PR. DAVID TEA OKOUClinical Molecular Geneticist, Molecular Biologist, Researcher and Scientific Consultant, Founder of the YTO Foundation



DR. CHRISTIAN RUSANGWA *Director of Technical Assistance, Muso*



DR. JAURÈS YAPI *Microbiologist, Lecturer and researcher, Pasteur Institute*



DR. SAFIATOU COULIBALYCoordinator, Genetics and Cancer Laboratory, Pasteur Institute





PR. THUMBI NDUNG'U

Director for Basic and Translational Science at AHRI, Professor of Infectious Diseases, University College London



JOHNPAUL OMOLLO

Public Health Professional and Health Policy Strategist



JULIE MURIUKI

Champion for Economic Empowerment, Gender Mainstreaming Advocate



DR. ROBERT KARANJA

Founder and Executive Director, Biolinx Africa



DR. LISA MICHENI

Senior Lecturer in Medical Microbiology, Pwani University





DR. MOUSSA SARR

Senior Researcher, Head of Business Development and Cooperation Group, IRESSEF



PR. COUMBA TOURÉ KANE

Professor at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, researcher specializing in microbiology and virology of infectious diseases



MARIÈME GUEYE

Researcher in Biofabrication and Regenerative Medicine, Utrecht University



PR. ANTA TAL-DIA

Pediatrician, Professor of Public Health (ER)/FMPO/UCAD, Member of the National Academy of Sciences and Techniques



DR. BABACAR GUEYE

Director of Planning, Research and Statistics, Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene

South Africa



GLAUDINA LOOTS

Director of Health Innovation, Department of Science and Innovation



DR. NOTHANDO NGWENYA

Head of Social Science and Research Ethics, African Health Research Institute



PR. NTOBEKO NTUSI

President and Chief Executive Officer, South African Medical Research Council



RUSSELL RENSBURG

Director, Rural Health Advocacy Project; advocate for equitable access to quality healthcare in rural communities

3. WHY HAVE THESE AVOS CHAMPIONS BEEN SELECTED?

These champions embody the influence, expertise and diversity of Africa's leadership in health RD&I. Each has contributed significantly to advancing national health RD&I priorities, demonstrated impact through their work and partnerships and have amplified Africa's voice in national, regional and global arenas. Together, they represent a balance of established leaders and emerging innovators.

4. HOW ARE THE AVoS CHAMPIONS SELECTED?

The selection of countries and profiles for AVoS was guided by a rigorous three-phase approach anchored in evidence synthesis, data modeling, and stakeholder engagement. Acomprehensive mapping exercise drew on over 25 variables—spanning gender, institutional affiliation, thematic expertise, policy influence, contributions to RD&I, and digital presence while integrating equity-centered criteria to surface women, youth, and underserved groups often overlooked in traditional leadership frameworks. This process was complemented by a series of in-depth interviews with R&D actors across the continent, ensuring that the selection was grounded in lived experience and sectoral insights, and helping to validate the champions most capable of driving Africa's health research agenda forward. Stakeholder profiles were then classified into seven categories—ranging from Eminent Figures and Youth Scientists to Unsung Heroes and Community-rooted Representatives—to ensure a multi-dimensional view of influence and impact.

5. WHY DOES AFRICAN VOICES OF SCIENCE EXIST?

Africa continues to produce world-class innovations, scientific breakthroughs, and possesses unprecedented genetic diversity, that benefits not only Africans, but also the global community.

Despite significant African scientific breakthroughs, for example, the real-time detection of new virus variants during outbreaks, and the fact that outcomes of global health RD&I are most applicable to African communities, African voices represent less than 5% of global health RD&I discussions in traditional media and social media. In other words, more than 95% of the coverage comes from voices outside Africa.

This imbalance means that although global health research is largely shaped by African realities, African expertise remains under-recognized, under-reported, and underfunded. Research investment often overlooks African priorities, and health R&D financing for Africa remains minimal.

It is against this backdrop that African Voices of Science (AVoS) was created to amplify African voices in global health RD&I, ensuring their expertise shapes national, regional, and global health agendas. By aligning closely with the African Health Research Innovation and Development Alliance (AHRIDA), AVoS contributes to a broader movement aimed at mobilizing resources, elevating African innovations, and securing the continent's health sovereignty.

Together, these initiatives ensure that Africa's scientific leadership is not only heard but also fully integrated into decision-making processes that affect the future of health research worldwide.

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6. HOW DOES AVOS REFLECT AFRICA'S OWN HEALTH RD&I PRIORITIES?

AVoS is grounded in Africa's own frameworks and strategies for health research, development, and innovation (RD&I). The initiative aligns with priorities identified by the African Union (AU), Africa CDC, and regional economic communities (RECs), as well as national governments' health and R&D agendas.

By amplifying the expertise of African scientists, AVoS ensures that the continent's unique data, innovations, and solutions are at the forefront of decision-making. The program highlights research that addresses Africa's most pressing health challenges—from infectious and non-communicable diseases to epidemic preparedness—while also supporting the AU's target of increasing investment in R&D.

In this way, AVoS does not impose external priorities but rather strengthens African ownership of its health RD&I agenda and accelerates the delivery of homegrown solutions that directly serve Africans.

7. THIS IS THE SECOND EDITION OF AVoS. WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT?

The first edition of AVoS was launched in 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, to respond to the widespread misinformation that undermined public health responses and exposed structural gaps in Africa's science communication. Bringing together scientists from diverse countries, AVoS amplified credible African voices that challenged myths, restored public trust, and positioned African expertise at the forefront of the pandemic response—demonstrating that when given platforms and support, African scientists can shape narratives, influence policy, and strengthen long-term trust in science.

Phase 2 of this initiative (AVoS II) moves beyond crisis response to seek an urgent institutionalization of the role of African health research specialists in shaping national and regional health RD&I agendas.

8. WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE INVOLVED IN THE AVoS INITIATIVE?

AVoS is led by Speak Up Africa, an African-led, Senegal-based organization dedicated to building an Africa where growth and sustainable development are driven by Africa's citizens. Speak Up Africa convenes, enables, and advocates. Focusing on strategic communications and advocacy, the organization is dedicated to supporting African leaders and citizens to take an active role in identifying and developing solutions to tackle the challenges facing the African continent — including malaria, NTDs, immunization, sanitation, gender equality, and global health research and development.

From its strategic base in Dakar, Senegal, the Speak Up Africa team partners with African leaders and change-makers to put in place the right policies and secure sufficient resources to achieve our sustainable development goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063. To find out more, visit: https://www.speakupafrica.org/

FURTHER INFORMATION

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