



OAFLAD and AORTIC 2020 call to action on International Women's Day 2020

OAFLAD and AORTIC Calls on African Leaders to Take Urgent Action towards Elimination of Cervical Cancer

OAFLAD and the AORTIC membership recognises that actions to eliminate cervical cancer will uniquely benefit women and communities in the African region due to the high incidence, high incidence to mortality ratio and growing burden in this region, particularly being driven by the HIV epidemic in some countries.

Our statement calls on African leaders to support the adoption of the WHO global 2020-2030 strategy and World Health Assembly Resolution and to make a public commitment to accelerate national action to achieve:

By 2030, effective strategies to eliminate cervical cancer caused by the Human Papillomavirus as a public health problem should be implemented in all African countries.

OAFLAD and AORTIC support the proposed World Health Organisation (WHO) 90-70-90 targets on Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination, and cervical cancer screening and treatment as ambitious but achievable in Africa.

The AORTIC membership offers its expertise and network of organisations across the continent to support governments in taking national action and commits to share an associated action plan to this statement in support of effective strategies for eliminating cervical cancers caused by HPV.

OAFLAD and the AORTIC membership will work together to monitor and report on progress against the following priority actions:

ACTIONS ON HPV VACCINATION

- By 2025, all African country cancer plans should include actions towards achieving population-based HPV vaccination of girls aged 9-13 (at a minimum), if not already established.
- By 2030, vaccination programmes against the HPV infection should be integrated into national immunisation programmes in all African countries.
- By 2030, coverage should be reported annually and the target vaccination rate in all African countries should be at least 90% of girls aged 9-13 years.
- In support of vaccination goals, global cooperation should be fostered, through WHO, UNICEF, GAVI and other agents, to resolve vaccine supply chain issues to ensure no country's HPV vaccination programmes are impacted because of shortage or affordability.

ACTIONS ON SCREENING & EARLY DIAGNOSIS

- By 2025, all African country cancer plans should include actions towards achieving the 70% screening target, with phased implementation steps and sustainable funding, if not already established.
- By 2030, coverage should be reported annually and the target screening rate in all African countries should be at least 70% of women screened for cervical cancer with an appropriate high precision HPV test within the last 5 years. This coverage should be reached, at minimum, at 35 and 45 years of age, as part of a population-based screening programme.
- In support of screening goals, HPV screening programmes should take into consideration innovations such as self-sampling in respect to their potential for achieving higher rates of screening and digital, m-health tools which support automated visual evaluation and patient navigation for maximising follow up of all women to completion of treatment.

ACTIONS ON TREATMENT

- By 2025, all African country cancer plans should include actions towards strengthening health systems and referral mechanisms to achieve treatment goals, with phased implementation steps and sustainable funding, if not already established.
- By 2030, across all African countries, 90% of women with Grade 1, 2 or 3 pre-cancers and 90% of all invasive cancer cases should have been detected and managed.

FURTHER SUPPORTING ACTIONS TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF CERVICAL CANCER ELIMINATION

HPV Awareness

- By 2025 all African country cancer plans should include actions towards increasing public, patient and healthcare professional understanding and awareness about HPV, cervical cancer and the role of HIV in this disease. This awareness includes their symptoms and forms of prevention. Furthermore, this communication effort should elaborate to the public, patients and healthcare professionals the potential and need for HPV elimination, the strategies being pursued to achieve that goal, and the role of the public, patients and healthcare professionals to achieve the elimination goal. Awareness levels of the public, patients and healthcare professionals on HPV should thereafter be monitored and reported on.
- These awareness raising actions should include civil society organisations, community groups and the schooling system.

Engagement of media and the public in taking action on elimination

- By 2022, cancer societies, patient and healthcare professional associations, and other stakeholders, should publish consensus recommendations for African member states to engage the public and media individual actions and responsibilities on taking action towards elimination and take measures to identify early and combat fake news on recommendations interventions.
- By 2022, all national cancer plans in Africa should include actions to inform monitor and combat the deterrence effects of myths and misconceptions on cancer and cancer prevention as part of a broader campaign to reduce the negative impact of fake news on all vaccination programmes.

Improving data and monitoring

- By 2025, all African countries should have population based registries in place to accountably track and report upon HPV vaccination, HPV screening and cervical cancer incidence and mortality data, leveraging existing data platforms.

Building the health workforce

- By 2022 all African countries should have assessed their workforce gaps, projected needs and training requirements by 2030. Actions to build and retain the workforce at all health care levels should be integrated into national cancer plans or national cervical cancer strategies.

Monitoring of Member State Cancer Plans

- As part of the coordination role that the WHO plays in assisting member states to combat cancer by 2025, a public monitoring and reporting exercise should be established in respect to African member states cancer plan items. This should include monitoring of actions towards international goals on cervical cancer elimination.