

OUTCOME DOCUMENT

SDGs and the role of ethics in SADC: Promoting bioethics, ethics education and research.

A Road Map for SADC Countries

Gaborone, Botswana

PREAMBLE

From 17-18 October 2017, policy makers, academics and practitioners in the field of bioethics from across East and Southern Africa, including government delegates from 11 African countries, convened in Botswana for the first SADC regional conference on the theme *SDGs and the role of ethics in SADC: Promoting bioethics, ethics education and research*, to review the status of bioethics, ethics education and research to prepare a solid foundation for the further development of bioethics in East and Southern Africa;

The conference was supported by the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa along with the UNESCO Regional Office for East Africa, in collaboration with the Botswana Ministry of Tertiary Education, Research, Science, and Technology, the Southern Africa Development Community, and the University of Botswana;

The conference saw the participation of the Honorable Minister Madigele from the Botswana Ministry of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology as well as the Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Dr. T. Mooko; the Southern Africa Development Community; Baisago University College, Boitekanelo College, Botho University, Dublin City University, Egerton University, Universal College of Law, University of Johannesburg, University of Malawi, Makerere University, the Uganda Martyrs University, Muhimbili University of Health and Applied Sciences, Nairobi Hospital, University of Namibia, Stellenbosch University, University of Witwatersrand, and the University of Zambia; as well chairpersons of National Research Ethics Committees, Heads of African National Institutes of Health and Medical Research Councils, and UNESCO;

Reaffirming the continued relevance of the fundamental bioethical principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights adopted by all Member States of UNESCO, and recognizing their significance for the 2030 Agenda;



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Cognizant that the bioethical approach to sustainable development can promote the development and application of science and technology for the benefit of human beings, communities, and the environment, and therefore can contribute to the achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals;

Recognizing the limited institutional and educational capacities in bioethics and the need to develop these capacities for the promotion of universal bioethical principles as well as the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Africa;

Affirming the need to better understand African cultural perspectives on the universal framework of bioethical principles;

Recognizing the capacity-building programs developed by UNESCO in response to the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, which calls for social responsibility on health and the sharing of research benefits, a priority for low income countries (articles 14 and 15), as well as assisting Member States in the establishment and promotion of independent, multidisciplinary and pluralist National Bioethics Committees (Article 19) and in promoting Bioethics Education, Training and Information (Article 23), and the work already carried out through these projects with the African Member States;

Noting the participation of delegates from Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe;

Fulfilling the request of SADC Senior Officials responsible for Education and Training, Science, Technology, and Innovation for UNESCO to support the development of bioethics in the SADC region during the 2016 Senior Officials Meeting held in Kasane, Botswana;

Reaffirming the Declaration of Malanje on South-South Collaboration (2016) and recognizing that current developments in science, technology and innovation are essential elements for progress and well-being of mankind, but at the same time that its irresponsible use can lead to risks for the protection of human rights and preservation of the environment;

The participants of the 2017 Regional Conference on Bioethics do hereby through this Outcome Document reaffirm their commitment to:



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1. Advocate for the teaching of bioethics in higher learning institutions as well as advance research that takes into account contextually relevant African cultural perspectives on bioethics.
2. Establish a Regional Network of Bioethics researchers, scholars, and institutions in SADC countries, to promote global cooperation, especially South-South cooperation, and exchange with counterparts in Sub-Saharan Africa.
3. Promote joint scientific and research endeavors, including publications, within the network. This includes publishing a list of pressing themes that need to be addressed urgently.
4. Advocate for the creation of National Bioethics Committees in East and Southern Africa and fully maximize the use of existing structures in place.
5. Advocate for the involvement of the public sector in funding research and programs and ensure accountability of practitioners.
6. Reinforce the capacities of National Bioethics Committees in East and Southern Africa to carry out their mandate in accordance to Article 19 of UDBHR.
7. Organize a second inter-regional conference in 2019 to evaluate the accomplishments of the Outcome Document thus far.
8. Continue to utilize UNESCO's guidance and technical expertise, including implementation of the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights and the various capacity-building projects linked to the Declaration.

Endorsed on this 24 October 2017.



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