

All Roads Lead to Abuja - the Highly Anticipated ASLM2018 Conference

The 2018 edition of the African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM) biennial conference – ASLM2018 – takes place in Abuja, Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory, from December 10 to 13, 2018. The theme of this year's conference is: 'Preventing and Controlling the Next Pandemic: The role of the laboratory'.

This year's conference is being held at the Transcorp Hilton hotel in Abuja and will feature plenary, breakout and poster sessions, culminating in an awards ceremony on the last day of the event.

According to Professor Alash'le Abimiku, Conference Co-Chair for ASLM2018, the objective of the conference is to provide an avenue for strong collaborations between leading researchers that will pave the way for the development of new strategies and medical technologies. Speaking on the rationale for hosting the ASLM conference in Nigeria, she said: "The intention of the ASLM conference is to engage more closely with the community of laboratory medicine professionals from West Africa. This is a platform for exchanging various experiences and ideas, for participation, co-ordination, and networking for future collaborations and to further the development of skills for young professionals. The goal is to ensure healthy African communities now and for the long-term."

Areas of interest for ASLM2018 include:

- The critical role of laboratory medicine in achieving the goals of international health regulation and universal health coverage
- Increasing awareness of opportunities to invest in diagnostics and in laboratory systems amongst private, public and philanthropic donors.
- Identifying the diagnostic needs that are specific to the African continent with particular focus on pathogens with high potential for pandemic spread
- Creation of public-private partnerships to ensure further development of both African laboratories and African diagnostics companies to enhance pandemic preparedness

This fourth edition of the biennial conference is expected to help further ASLM's strategic objectives of:

- Strengthening laboratory workforce by training and certifying laboratory professionals and clinicians through standardised frameworks;
- Transforming laboratory testing quality by enrolling laboratories in quality improvement programmes to achieve accreditation by international standards;
- Developing strong, harmonised regulatory systems for diagnostic products as defined by the Global Harmonization Taskforce;
- Building a network of national public health reference laboratories to improve early disease detection and collaborative research;
- Disseminating results and best practices.

ASLM will achieve these goals by working collaboratively with governments, local and international organisations, implementing partners and the private sector. ASLM2018 will build on the successes achieved in the first three editions and continue to provide opportunities and be instrumental in taking laboratory medicine to greater reaches.

ASLM is an independent, pan-African professional body that coordinates, galvanises and mobilises relevant stakeholders towards improving access to world-class laboratory services. The body also has the mandate to ensure healthy African communities.

ASLM is headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and serves all African countries. It is endorsed by the African Union. Further details about the conference, including onsite registration, can be found at www.aslm2018.org

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