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Global Health EDCTP3

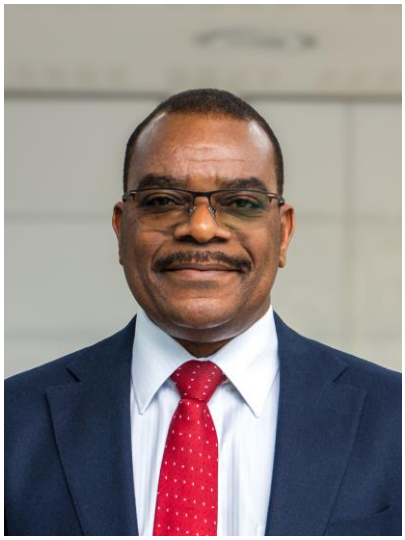
Speaker bios and project summary

Global Health EDCTP3 session at the UNGA80 Science Summit:

Africa–Europe cooperation for health security in a changing climate

25 September 2025, 09:00-09:45 EDT (hybrid). CURE – Rooftop. 345, Park Avenue South, New York.

Chairpersons



Dr Michael Makanga

Executive Director at Global Health EDCTP3, Belgium

Dr Michael Makanga started his tenure as the Executive Director of Global Health EDCTP3 on 16 November 2023. He has extensive experience in the global health research sector and was previously the Executive Director of the EDCTP Association.

He is a clinician-scientist with nearly thirty years of health and clinical research work experience in African and European institutions. He has a medical degree from Makerere University, a master's and PhD in pharmacology and therapeutics from the Liverpool University and School of Tropical Medicine and is a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh.

He has vast experience in global health, research for health capacity development, engagement with policy makers, ethics and regulatory authorities in both Africa and Europe. Moreover, he has served in various scientific, and policy advisory boards involved in developing medical products and associated technologies for infectious diseases, including the World Bank, international product development organisations, philanthropies and pharmaceutical companies.

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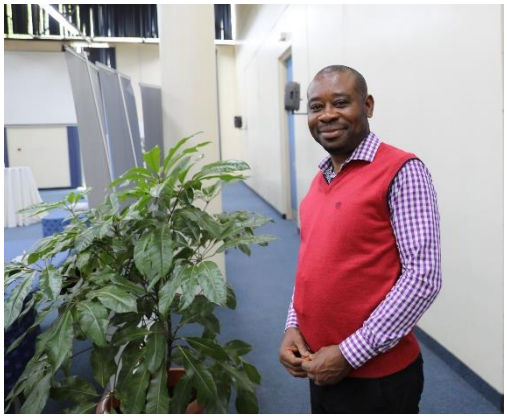
Ms Lara Pandya

Team Leader for Strategic Partnerships and Communications at Global Health EDCTP3, Belgium

As Team Leader for Strategic Partnerships and Communications, Lara Pandya oversees the external relations and international cooperation activities of Global Health EDCTP3, including monitoring and evaluation. She is responsible for creating and nurturing collaboration and partnerships with both the Member States participating in Global Health EDCTP3 and a wide variety of public and private stakeholders. This includes designing and executing joint initiatives with strategic partners and facilitating the coordination and alignment of European and African national research programmes around a joint research agenda on infectious diseases. She initially joined EDCTP as a Project Officer in 2007. Lara has a background in global public health and clinical research and development, with over 20 years of experience in partnership building, networking, resource mobilisation, communications, advocacy and project management for a variety of international health organisations. As a graduate from the University of Bristol, where she completed both her bachelors and Master of Science in Geography, Lara subsequently obtained a Master's in Public Health at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM).

Expert presentations of Global Health EDCTP3 case studies



Dr David Tchouassi

Senior Research Scientist at ICIPE, Kenya

David P. Tchouassi (PhD), is a Senior Research Scientist in the Human Health Theme at the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (*icipe*), Nairobi, Kenya. He is a medical entomologist energised with the vision to contribute to the solutions toward vector-borne disease surveillance and control. He obtained a PhD at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, working on Rift Valley fever vector chemical ecology and genetics. He previously served as Research Scientist (2015-2022) and Postdoctoral Fellow (2013-2015) at *icipe*. His research focuses on transmission biology, ecology, and epidemiology of malaria and arboviral diseases, with also keen interest in chemical communication of their associated vectors. He is the scientific lead of the project IMPACTING- Integrated Multi-Vector-Borne Diseases Platform to assess

global change impacts on transmission using innovative systems modeling, novel monitoring tools, and transmission blocking of microorganisms.

Dr Antoine Barreaux

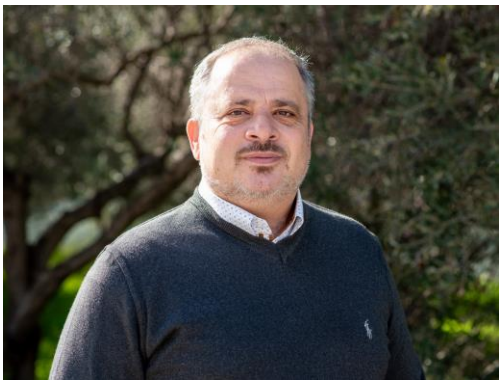
Epidemiologist at CIRAD, Kenya

Dr Barreaux is an epidemiologist and mathematical modeler at CIRAD (Centre de coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement) in the INTERTRYP unit since 2022 and based in Nairobi, Kenya since 2023 as a visiting scientist at ICIPE. He aims to reduce vector-borne diseases transmission by integrating experimental, field and theoretical approaches to improve disease models and the implementation of vector and disease control. He obtained a PhD at the University of Neuchatel, Switzerland, on the eco-immunology of the malaria vector Anopheles gambiae. He previously served as Postdoctoral Scientist (2016-2019) on malaria control at Penn State University, US, and as Senior Research Associate (2019-2021) at the University of Bristol, UK, on modelling of tsetse evolution, trypanosomiasis and COVID-19. He is the coordinator of IMPACTING and co-leader of WP1 on modelling.

Summary of IMPACTING

Impacting aims to improve the surveillance and control of vector-borne diseases in sub-Saharan Africa. To achieve this, it identifies the factors—particularly those linked to global changes—that define vector risk, it enhances and develops surveillance and control tools, and it closely involves communities and policymakers in shaping strategies. Targeted vectors and associated diseases include mosquitoes (malaria, dengue, chikungunya, yellow fever), tsetse flies (HAT: human African trypanosomiasis), blackflies (onchocerciasis), and ticks (Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever).

Click here to know more.



Dr Michail Kotsyfakis

Research Professor at IMBB-FORTH, Greece

Michail Kotsyfakis, PhD (University of Crete, 2004), is a Research Professor at IMBB-FORTH, Greece. After postdoctoral training at NIAID/NIH (USA), he led in 2009 the Laboratory of Genomics and Proteomics of Disease Vectors at the Czech Academy of Sciences before joining IMBB-FORTH in 2023. He has supervised PhD theses, mentored postdocs, and secured major funding from the EU, Human Frontiers Science Program, EMBO, Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, and Czech Science Foundation. He coordinates ResTick and studies tick–host molecular interactions to clarify disease transmission and develop tick-derived therapies for immune and haemostatic disorders.

Summary of ResTick

ResTick addresses the growing threat of ticks as disease vectors in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a particular focus on Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever. Climate change is reshaping tick populations, pathogen transmission, and ecosystem dynamics, making early intervention essential. The initiative combines molecular ecology, epidemiology, veterinary science, and diagnostic assay development to better understand tick species, pathogens, and their interactions. By establishing baseline data, ResTick is creating early warning and monitoring systems, while developing affordable, user-friendly diagnostic tools and point-of-care devices. Advanced statistical approaches and predictive modelling are used to forecast tick abundance and disease prevalence. Integrating these findings into One Health strategies will enhance public health preparedness, support sustainable livestock farming, and promote economic resilience in the region. Through interdisciplinary collaboration and cross-border cooperation, ResTick seeks to generate practical solutions, safeguard health systems, and strengthen societal responses to tick-borne diseases in a changing climate.

Click here to know more.

Dr Sören Leif Becker

Director of the Institute of Medical Microbiology and Hygiene at the Saarland University Medical Centre, Germany

Born in 1985. Studies of medicine at University of Freiburg, 2004-2011. Postgraduate studies of infectious disease epidemiology at University of Basel, 2012-2015. Board-certified in Medical microbiology, virology and infectious disease epidemiology. Vast experience

of collaborative clinical and diagnostic research work in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and South Asia, with a focus on strongyloidiasis and other neglected tropical diseases. Since 2018 Director of the Institute of Medical Microbiology and Hygiene at Saarland University Medical Center, Homburg, Germany.

Dr Aaron Aboderin

Professor at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria

Aaron Oladipo Aboderin is a Professor of Clinical Microbiology, he is the Deputy Provost of the College of Health Sciences. He is also a Consultant Clinical Microbiologist at the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals Complexes, Ile-Ife, in Nigeria, since 2000; where he also coordinates the Residency Training program for the institution. His Primary focus of his research is on epidemiology of enteric infections, healthcare-associated infections, AMR, and antimicrobial stewardship. He is involved in the training of numerous students and resident doctors in clinical microbiology and has over 50 peer-reviewed journal articles.

Summary of ComBac-Africa

Antimicrobial resistance is a major global health threat for humans, animals and the environment, with the highest mortality and morbidity rates in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The World Health Organization prioritised several carbapenem-resistant Gram-negative bacteria such as Enterobacterales or Pseudomonas aeruginosa as the most critical pathogens with only very limited treatment options. Bacteraemia, sepsis and other severe infections caused by carbapenem-resistant bacteria (CRB) give rise to excess mortality. Yet, the causative pathogens are rarely identified in patients in SSA due to a lack of microbiological diagnostics. The new antibiotics ceftazidime-avibactam, cefiderocol and aztreonam-avibactam are active against some CRB and could significantly reduce morbidity and mortality, but they are not widely available in SSA.

The ComBac-Africa consortium has the overall goal to improve the management of severe infections caused by CRB in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria through the establishment of a needs-adapted diagnostic and antimicrobial stewardship programme that provides equitable access to these novel antibiotics for targeted treatment. This will be achieved through (1) provision of high-quality and accurate microbiological diagnostics for prompt and correct identification of causative agents in bacteraemia and other severe infections; (2) a comprehensive One Health assessment of the epidemiology of CRB in humans, animal and environmental specimens; (3) tailored diagnostic and antimicrobial stewardship initiatives, including early outbreak detection and infection prevention measures, to optimise the use of novel antimicrobials; (4) development of clinical algorithms for targeted diagnosis and treatment of infections due to CRB; and (5) establishment of sustainable, equitable and affordable access to ceftazidime-avibactam, cefiderocol and aztreonam-avibactam in SSA together with the pharmaceutical industry and international initiatives

Click here to know more.

Speakers – panel discussion

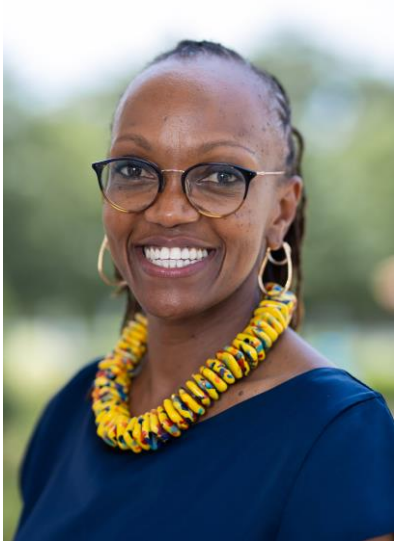
Prof Flemming Konradsen

Chief Scientific Officer. Novo Nordisk Foundation

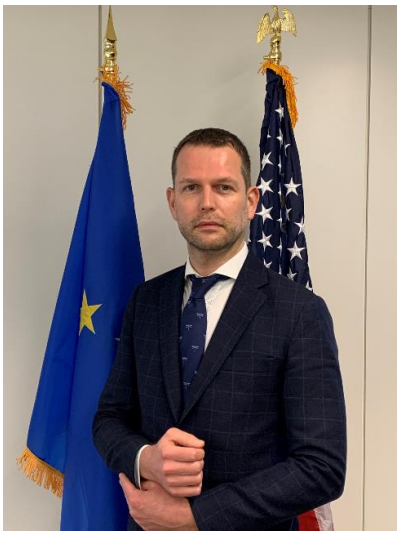
Prof Flemming Konradsen is overall responsible for the Foundation's development and implementation of research and development programmes within health and global health. Prior to joining the Foundation, Flemming was a Visiting Professor at Emory University from 2007 – 2022. During 2011 – 2021, he was a member, and from 2014, Chair of the Consultative Research Committee for Development Research (FFU) under the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2019, Flemming became a member and, from 2023, Chair of the Grundfos Foundation. He holds a PhD from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Dr Evelyn Gitau

Chief Scientific Officer. Science for Africa Foundation



Dr Evelyn Gitau is Chief Scientific Officer where she leads strategy and research to advance science, innovation, and equitable development across Africa. With over 25 years' experience in biomedical research and programme leadership, Evelyn drives initiatives such as Grand Challenges Africa and Deltas Africa, supporting transformative solutions for health, climate, and food security. She is a passionate advocate for equity in science, ensuring African researchers and communities shape research priorities and benefit from innovation. Evelyn's work bridges policy, practice, and evidence to address Africa's most pressing challenges. Previously, she was Director of Programmes at the African Population and Health Research Centre. She holds a PhD in Life Sciences from the Open University/Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.



Dr Florent Bernard

Counsellor for Research and Innovation at the EU Delegation to the US, European Commission

Dr Florent Bernard is the Counsellor for Research and Innovation at the European Union Delegation to the United States in Washington, DC. He assists in the strengthening of transatlantic research and innovation synergies, notably through the European R&I programme 'Horizon Europe'. Prior to this position, he was an International Relations Officer for the European Commission working on EU-China and EU-India cooperation. Florent has a Ph.D. in molecular biology from the Université Libre de Bruxelles, he also studied at the University of Georgia, USA; the University of Barcelona, Spain; and the University of Florence, Italy. He is an Honorary Citizen of the State of Georgia, USA.