

Recommendations/ Resolutions of the 36th Conference of the International Scientific Council for Trypanosomiasis Research and Control (ISCTRC) held in Mombasa, Kenya on the 18th to 22nd September 2023

Preamble

We, the Delegates to the ISCTRC Conference, having met in Mombasa from the 18th to the 22nd September 2023, underscore the importance of trypanosomiasis and its impact on human health, animal productivity and socio-economic development in Africa.

We recognise the many actors and initiatives towards improving Africa's development by getting rid of the major obstacle posed by tsetse and trypanosomiasis, which have led to significant gains in that endeavour. Major strides have been made particularly in Human African Trypanosomiasis (HAT), which has been eliminated as a public health problem in several countries, while many others are on the path to the same. Similarly, there are many players in the battle against the animal disease, as well as the tsetse fly and mechanical vectors.

We express our gratitude to the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) for mobilizing resources for coordinated action through the ISCTRC, which facilitates coordinated efforts against the African trypanosomiasis.

Noting the role and significant contribution of the ISCTRC to provide a forum on which several players in the battle against tsetse and trypanosomiasis meet, exchange knowledge and share information on T&T research and control.

Underscoring that 7 African Union Member States have eliminated HAT as a public health problem; and that several others have embraced the Progressive Control Pathway (PCP) to similarly address African Animal Trypanosomiasis (AAT).

Recognizing that the past and current trends portend increasingly severe, recurrent and often more widespread, complex crises, compounded by re-emerging threats that can affect Africa's systems; and that significant investment, policy, regulatory and institutional reforms are necessary;

The following recommendations were made during the 36th ISCTRC Conference:

Session 2: International Organisations

- FAO and AU should continue promoting the streamlining of the progressive control pathway (PCP) approach into national and regional policies and strategies against African Animal Trypanosomiasis
- IAEA and AU should strengthen capacity building in Member States for informed decision-making regarding the choice of tsetse and trypanosomiasis strategies and the cost-effective integration of the sterile insect technique (SIT) operations in area-wide integrated pest management (AW-IPM) campaigns, with the objective of creating and expanding tsetse-free zones

- We call up on all stakeholders to mobilize concerted efforts and action to relaunch PATTEC initiative for the effective control and elimination of tsetse and trypanosomiasis in Africa
- The AU should renew its efforts to reactivate the PATTEC Coordination Office and its functions to provide coordination and leadership in the implementation of the PATTEC initiative at the continental level
- In this renewal, urge member states to establish and support institutional structures for consolidating and sustaining the Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication initiative as a good practice that can be adopted by member states.
- That done, PATTEC initiative relaunch should be included in the agenda for the next AU summit
- AU-PATTEC should be set back on track as one of the AUC specialized technical office to collaborate with WOAHA
- Cross-border projects should be developed for research and control of HAT, AAT, and the vectors
- Financial support for regional insectaries established in Burkina Faso and Ethiopia for mass production of sterile tsetse flies for Member States/PATTEC countries to implement Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) and tsetse species compatibility studies should be provided.

Session 3: country reports

- Develop cross-border projects with cross-border project funding to control AAT and HAT especially for Common Tsetse Belts covering several Member States.
- Strengthening in-country collaborations between HAT and AAT teams for sustainable trypanosomiasis control in a One-Health framework.

Session 4a: HAT diagnosis

- Continued availability of Card Agglutination Test for Trypanosomiasis (CATT) as the test of choice for active screening should be ensured
- Current and upcoming Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDTs) should be improved in order to comply with the characteristics described in the WHO target product profiles (TPPs)
- Research to improve concordance between reference laboratory tests (molecular and serological) should be undertaken. It is needed to continue to evaluate the performance of these tests including new tests
- In view of the lack of correlation between the results of the post hoc confirmation tests, evaluation of the performance and further refinement of these and new tests, should be undertaken.
- Research and development of serological tests (e.g. rapid diagnostic tests) for rhodesiense HAT should be undertaken in order to improve the rHAT case detection.

Session 4b: HAT screening strategies and elimination

- Simple and cost-effective surveillance methods to drive elimination of HAT in current and historical/silent foci should be adapted
- Community participation in HAT screening should be encouraged, by adapting innovative approaches that counter socio-cultural barriers to this endeavor.
- Modelling studies built around cost-effectiveness should be undertaken, to inform interventions towards HAT elimination in endemic countries

Session 4c: HAT treatments and vaccines

- Considering the results of clinical trials of fexinidazole in rhodesiense HAT, the WHO should support completion of the regulatory framework for registration of this drug for rHAT.
- Further trials to enable use of new drugs (e.g. Acoziborole) in children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, as well as extension to seropositive individuals should be carried out.

Session 4d: HAT animal reservoir and vector control in HAT elimination

- More studies are required to provide concrete evidence for the hypothetical role played by animal hosts in gambiense HAT transmission.
- Control of the vector (and the animal reservoir where present) should be deliberately executed alongside other strategies for HAT elimination, in a one health approach.

Session 5, Theme 3: Animal African Trypanosomiasis

- AAT research activities should be integrated with control activities in collaboration with veterinary services.
- Robust databases/information system (e.g. atlases) on tsetse and AAT to guide evidence-based decision-making should be established
- Research to develop new trypanocides effective against all trypanosomes simultaneously should be accelerated
- Laboratory capacity and diagnostics for AAT should be strengthened; this could be done with support from WOA, through their laboratory twinning programme to train laboratory staff.
- Regional reference laboratories for the diagnosis of AAT should be set up across the African continent; and supported to be recognised as WOA Collaborating Centres.
- Noting that little progress has been made in addressing AAT, the meeting urged countries, RECS, AU-IBAR, FAO and partners to support/develop strategies and programmes and promote sustained funding to address AAT across the continent.
- The PCP tool for AAT should be promoted to guide formulation and implementation of national, regional and continental strategies and programmes for the control and elimination of AAT.
- The meeting noted and appreciated research activities that are ongoing to develop new AAT diagnostics and therapeutics and urged that these activities be continued
- Research into the role of biting flies to maintain trypanosome transmission in the absence of tsetse flies should continue; Integration of non-tsetse transmitted trypanosomiasis in national control programmes should be encouraged.
- The meeting noted and appreciated work being done in countries for the development of National Atlas of tsetse flies and African animal trypanosomiasis to guide surveillance and control activities. The meeting however noted diminishing activities for the control of tsetse and AAT activities in the countries and as a matter of concern urged countries to intensify and mobilize resources to implement control programmes in the countries.
- Noting that little progress is being made to address AAT, the meeting urged countries, regions and African union to develop strategies and programme to ensure a common vision and sustained funding and appropriate institutional mechanisms to address AAT in the continent.

Session 7: Glossina biology, control and eradication

- National governments should prioritize funding for and work jointly to eliminate Trans-border fly-belt in order to eliminate Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis
- National governments should include T&T in their sustainable development goals, making use of the already available techniques and tools to undertake sustainable T&T control
- It was noted that HAT elimination can be enhanced if vector is also sustainably controlled, therefore efforts to sustain HAT elimination can benefit from inclusion of tsetse control components
- An Integrated approach (“One Health”) is recommended as the driver for HAT elimination as well as the progressive control pathway for Animal trypanosomosis.

Session 8: Land Use, Environment and Socio-economics

- The community needs to be involved more in tsetse and trypanosomiasis research and control activities; therefore, socio-economic components should be included in projects and other interventions.
- There is a need for community integration into activities right from the start.