

# CLIMADE AFRICA WORKING GROUP MEETING MINUTES – WEEK 21

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**Host:** Centre for Epidemic Response and Innovation (CERI)

**Date:** September 26, 2023

**Time:** 12:00 – 13:00 p.m. (SAST)

**Facilitators:** Dr Houriiyah Tegally and Dr Monika Moir

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**Attendance/ No. of Participants:** 57

**Start time:** 12:01p.m. (SAST)

## **Purpose of the meeting**

Master protocols and preparedness through pivoting of integrated genomic surveillance for public health response.

## **Agenda Items**

1. Welcome
2. Discussion on master protocols and preparedness through pivoting of integrated genomic surveillance for public health response by Dr. Sikhulile Moyo, Laboratory Director of the Botswana Harvard AIDS Institute.
3. Discussion and feedback

## **Discussion points and questions**

- Welcome and introduction to this week's discussion by Dr Monika Moir.
- Presentation by Dr Sikhulile Moyo on integrated genomic surveillance for public health response – lessons from Botswana.
- Dr Moyo had given a brief introduction to Botswana and began the discussion focusing on:
  - Botswana health prior to Covid
  - Ranked the third highest for HIV endemic.
  - Focus was mainly on HIV, HBVs and TB

- Botswana Health Systems
- Botswana Sars-CoV-2 response – Laboratory team was part of the Presidential Task Force.
- Genomic Surveillance
  - Implementing covid genomic surveillance using WHO and Africa CDC guidelines.
- Integrating Sars-CoV-2 genomic surveillance in Botswana.
  - PCR positive sample
  - Sample strategy
  - Sequence analysis
  - Dissemination of results which was aimed at:
    - To identify circulating lineage/variants in Botswana
    - Outbreak investigations (phylogenetic and Phylodynamic Analysis)
    - Viral evolution (inter and intra host)
    - Impact of variant on disease outcome
- Creation and development of master protocols
- Metadata collection (standardisation of information collected)
- Pivoting – Using existing systems to establish Sars-CoV-2 genomic surveillance.
- Covid 19 and genomic public health response
- Laboratory pillar – workforce training and preparedness
- Imported and local cases – tracking introductions , overseas cases as well as regional cases.
- Emergence of C.1.2 in Botswana
- Early detection of Delta and first 19 cases of the omicron variant in Botswana which resulted in an increase in Sars-CoV-2 cases.
- Days from sample collection to submission.
- One Health Approach (Africa CDC)
  - Early Detection
  - Cost Effective
  - Collaboration
- Overview and objectives of One Health Approach.
- Integrating approaches to health

- Disciplinary approach
  - Multidisciplinary approach
  - interdisciplinary approach
  - transdisciplinary approach
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- Comprehensive scientific approaches needed in relation to climate change
  - Importance of integrating approaches.
  - Genomics – Pathogen discovery in Botswana in collaboration with CLIMADE.
  - Focus on Pathogens studied in Botswana .
  - High level and Government level support
  - Current and ongoing sampling
  - Acknowledgements
  - Dr Monika Moir Opened the floor for discussion
  - Maintaining focus on particular scientific questions and research
  - Grants and Fundings
  - Public Health institutes and Research institute collaborations.
  - Creating working relationships
  - Sampling strategies for human and vectors.
  - Botswana has febrile illness protocols and plans involving sequencing of historic samples.
  - Maintaining cohesive team work and collaboration.

### **Adjournment and Closing points.**

1. Dr Houriiyah Tegally highlighted the subsequent meeting discussions which will address the current arbovirus outbreaks and impact of modelling on public health. Dr Monika Moir adjourned the meeting at 13:02 p.m. (SAST).

### **Next Meeting**

To be confirmed by email.

**Submitted by:** Yajna Ramphal

**Approved By:** Monika Moir