

**Day 1: 16:25 – 16:40**

**Building Clinical Trial Capacity in Low Middle Income Countries:  
The story of the Leishmaniasis East Africa Platform**



Wasunna Monique, MD. PhD

**(Director, Drugs for Neglected Diseases  
Initiative Africa Regional Office, Kenya)**

### Short CV

**Dr. Wasunna** is the Director, Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative Africa Regional Office. She is a physician, an infectious disease, and tropical medicine specialist. She is well-published in peer-review journals and is one of the leading women in science in the African continent,

Dr Wasunna received the Distinguished Neglected Tropical Diseases Researcher Award from the Kenya Ministry of Health and the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), Partnership Award from KEMRI, Mycetoma Ambassador by the Mycetoma Research Center, Sudan in 2019.

In 2020, she was awarded the National Order of Merit “Officier de l’ordre national du mérite”, by the French Government in recognition of her exemplary work on Neglected Tropical Diseases.

She is a member of the Kenya Association of Physicians, a fellow of the East Central and Southern Africa College of Physician and a member of the African Vaccine Delivery Alliance of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

### Abstract

Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) is an international not-for-profit drug research and development organization created in July 2003 to address the lack of safe, efficacious, easy to use, affordable treatments for neglected patients. In August 2003, DNDi created the Leishmaniasis East Africa Platform (LEAP) to facilitate clinical testing and improved access to better treatments for leishmaniasis in Eastern Africa. LEAP member countries are Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Sudan. It has over 60 members from around the world.

Clinical trials (CTs) undertaken in Africa are disproportionately few and yet they carry massive benefits in innovation, improved healthcare, patient outcomes and benefits for Africa development. Only 2.5% of CTs occur in Africa and yet Africa contributes to 17.5% of the global population. The number of healthcare workers (HCW) is low in Africa. Urgent measures need to be put in place to retain HCW and deliver innovation in Africa.

In 2003, clinical trials (CTs) capacity in the region was fragmented and there was urgent need to develop, strengthen, and sustain CTs infrastructure. To do this, LEAP carried out Good Clinical Practice, Good Laboratory Practice training, and strengthened infrastructure for CTs in the member countries. To date, LEAP has carried out over ten CTs, out of which three CTs resulted in treatment guidelines and policy change.

Lessons learned, successes, challenges from LEAP and the way forward are important to demonstrate how collaboration and partnerships can strengthen CTs capacity in Africa.