



Press Release

Pan-African Surgical Conference Aims to Improve Access to Comprehensive Surgical Care and Boost Africa's Health Workforce



November 26, 2024 – By 2030, Africa is projected to face over half of the global shortage of surgical care providers, with a shortfall of 6 million professionals. Currently, Africa has the fewest surgeons and anesthesiologists per capita worldwide, according to the World Health Organization. For every 10,000 people, there are just two doctors and 11 nurses and midwives, compared to 41 doctors and 113 nurses and midwives in North America. To address this urgent need, the first Pan-African Surgical Conference will be held from February 24 – 28, 2025 in Kigali, Rwanda.

The Pan-African Surgical Conference will focus on the need to improve access to surgical care in Africa and ways to address Africa's surgical crisis by creating growth opportunities for surgical

professionals. The conference, themed "Building Resilient and Sustainable Surgical Services in Africa: A Surgeon in Every District," is created by and for the Pan-African surgical community. It will bring together leading academics, policymakers, global surgery experts and other stakeholders to address critical challenges and share opportunities generally in surgery, particularly in plastic and reconstructive surgery on the continent. The event is organized conjointly by Operation Smile, Rwanda Surgical Society, the University of Rwanda and the Rwanda Ministry of Health.

"Amid ongoing challenges in health care access across Africa, the Pan-African Surgical Conference represents a key opportunity to address critical issues," says Dr. Billy Magee, chief medical officer at Operation Smile and co-chair of the conference. "We are focused on delivering actionable results that enhance surgical health in every district. By prioritizing capacity building, infrastructure development and policy advocacy, our goal is to secure access to essential surgical services for all communities, supported by the plastic and reconstructive surgical community."

Professor Faustin Ntirenganya, a senior consultant general and onco-plastic surgeon at the University of Rwanda and co-chair of the conference, understands the pressing need for more trained surgeons. "By uniting stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, we can make significant strides in addressing health care disparities and improving surgical care delivery across the continent," Ntirenganya emphasizes.

Conference participants can look forward to a comprehensive program featuring expert panels, interactive sessions and networking opportunities designed to drive surgical advancements on the continent. Discussions will also focus on innovative solutions in health care infrastructure, policy advocacy for surgical equity and strategies for enhancing surgical training and research in Africa.

For registration, sponsorship opportunities, attendance, preconference workshops, abstract submission and further details about the first Pan-African Surgical Conference, visit panafricansurgicalconference.com.

About Operation Smile

Operation Smile is a leading global nonprofit bridging the gap in access to essential surgeries and health care, starting with cleft surgery and comprehensive care. We provide medical expertise, training, mentorship, research and care through our dedicated staff and volunteers around the world, working alongside local governments, nonprofits and health systems, and supported by our generous donors and corporate partners. Visit operationsmile.org for more information.

More information

For media inquiries or interview requests, contact Melissa Phera, regional communications at Operation Smile via panafricanmediarelations@operationsmile.org.



**PAN-AFRICAN
SURGICAL
CONFERENCE**

Pan-African Surgical Conference: Building Resilient and Sustainable Surgical Services in Africa

Pre-Conference Training Sessions: 22 - 23 February 2025

Main Event: 24 - 28 February 2025

Venue: Kigali Serena Hotel and the Kigali Marriott Hotel