

Addressing Global Health Security at the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit

What is the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit?

It's the largest engagement a U.S. president has ever had with African leaders and governments. The [U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit](#) will bring together 50 heads of state, along with a range of U.S. and African civil society and business leaders, to discuss the future of Africa.

What issues will the Summit address?

The summit leader sessions will focus on topics such as trade and investment, peace and regional stability, and good governance. The signature events will address issues such as civil society, women's empowerment, global health, resilience and food security, and wildlife trafficking.

What will happen at the global health event?

The signature event on global health, *Investing in Health: Investing in Africa's Future*, will celebrate the global health successes Africa has already achieved and the progress still needed. More specifically, U.S. and African leaders will discuss:

Improving Global Health Security: Despite scientific advancements in health care, a reduction in the number of deaths caused by preventable diseases and increased interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields by young Africans, much remains to be done. The outbreaks of Ebola in West Africa and polio in Central Africa this past year illustrate that the threat of dangerous diseases is real for all countries that don't prioritize health security efforts. To improve global health security, countries around the world need to work together to monitor and quickly respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases.

Encouraging Science and Health Research: To promote science and health research, participants will discuss ways to share this responsibility with the private sector, train new leaders in the health and science fields, support local scientists in their research and integrate technology into research. Bolstering research capacity will enable Africa to play a larger role in the health-policy process and will promote economic development.

Achieving an AIDS-free generation: The United States and Africa have a strong and long-standing partnership toward achieving an AIDS-free generation. The [U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief \(PEPFAR\)](#), launched in 2003 by President George W. Bush and strengthened by President Obama, is the United States' commitment to this effort. The U.S. government has contributed more than \$52 billion to PEPFAR and other global AIDS programs through fiscal year 2013. Working together, the United States and Africa have distributed AIDS treatments to millions, saved millions of lives, built more secure families and helped stabilize fragile nations. This partnership is bringing African countries closer to achieving an AIDS-free generation.

Ending Preventable Maternal and Child Deaths: Ending preventable maternal and child deaths due to poor health care is within our reach. Worldwide, the annual number of maternal deaths between 1990 and 2010 dropped from 543,000 to 287,000, and the annual number of child deaths between 1990 and 2012 dropped from 12 million to 6.6 million. By helping African

nations develop more sustainable financing models for their health care systems, these numbers will continue to drop. Investing in the life expectancy of mothers and children will strengthen workforce productivity and the African economy as healthier and stronger people enter the workforce.

Why is this issue important to young African leaders?

In 2014, poor health continues to pose a tremendous challenge to development. By improving health security, encouraging science and health research, achieving an AIDS-free generation and ending preventable maternal and child deaths across the continent, African leaders can ensure a brighter future for Africa. And that's a future YALI Network members can help create.

Photo credit: Noor Khamis

Investing in Health: Investing in Africa's Future –Health Signature Event of the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit

Representatives from African nations and U.S. government agencies, members of Congress, leaders of multilateral and nongovernmental organizations, as well Mandela Washington Fellows met to discuss several areas of U.S.-Africa health partnerships. In light of the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, speakers urged ongoing investment in African nations' abilities to prevent, detect and contain diseases to bolster global health security.

Speakers also discussed the progress made in the fight against HIV/AIDS, noting that 6 million AIDS deaths have been averted since 2002, a trend that can be increased through focused efforts, integrated health systems and further investments. The vitality of health science and research partnerships was illustrated through the success in combating HIV/AIDS, with speakers stressing the need to invest in African nations' abilities to develop stable career paths for scientists to work in their native countries.

Finally, success in ending preventable child and maternal deaths is possible through focused attention on family planning interventions and the development of national strategies, targets and progress-tracking systems. In closing, [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell](#) stressed the importance of partnerships between nations and the sense of urgency underlying all the issues that were discussed.
