

# African Society for Laboratory Medicine

Building an Effective Laboratory Biosafety  
Response in Africa



# ASLM Strategic Vision for Africa in 2020 - 4 Major Goals



## Vision

*Improve healthcare in Africa by strengthening laboratory services*

## Mission

*Advance professional laboratory medicine practices, science and networks in Africa*

### **Goal 1 – African Laboratory Workforce Development**

*Certify 30,000 laboratory professionals /technicians*

### **Goal 2 –Laboratory Accreditation**

*Enroll 2, 500 laboratories in the WHO SLIPTA and assist 250 laboratories to achieve accreditation*

### **Goal 3 –African National and Regional Regulatory Environments**

*Raise regulatory standards in 25 countries and to enable harmonized regulation of diagnostics in the 5 economic regions of Africa*

### **Goal 4 - African Network of National Public Health Reference Laboratories**

*Develop national public health reference laboratories in 30 countries*

# Key ASLM achievements to date

- **WHO-AFRO SLIPTA Program.** Partnered with WHO-AFRO to implement the WHO-AFRO SLIPTA program. To date 160 labs audited across 22 African countries
- **African Public Health Laboratory Network.** Established an unprecedented pan-African network of national public health reference laboratories in 30 countries across Africa
- **Political Advocacy.** Led a Ministerial Call to Action for Laboratory Strengthening signed by one third of African countries
- **Diagnostics Access Initiative.** Partnered with UNAIDS to launch the Diagnostics Access Initiative to achieve new 90-90-90 HIV treatment targets
- **GLI-Africa.** Partnered with WHO and GLI to launch a Laboratory Initiative for improved TB diagnostics for Africa



## **MINISTERIAL CALL FOR ACTION - STRENGTHENING LABORATORY SERVICES IN AFRICA -**

*We, the undersigned Ministers of Health from African countries, attending and meeting at the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference of the African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM), Cape Town, South Africa, December 1<sup>st</sup> th, 2012 under the theme “Accurate Laboratory Diagnostics – A Pillar of Quality Health Care”*

# ASLM, Biosafety and Global Health Security

- ASLM leads a CDC-supported laboratory Global Health Security Agenda response across 17 countries
- ASLM network of GHSA implementing partners, e.g.
  - Institute Pasteur, Senegal
  - Cheikh Anta Diop University, Senegal
  - Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria
  - Global Health Systems Solutions, Cameroon
  - Resaolab, Burkino Faso
- ASLM GHSA experts, e.g.
  - Amsterdam Institute for Global Health Development, APHL, Public Health Agency of Canada, Riders for Health

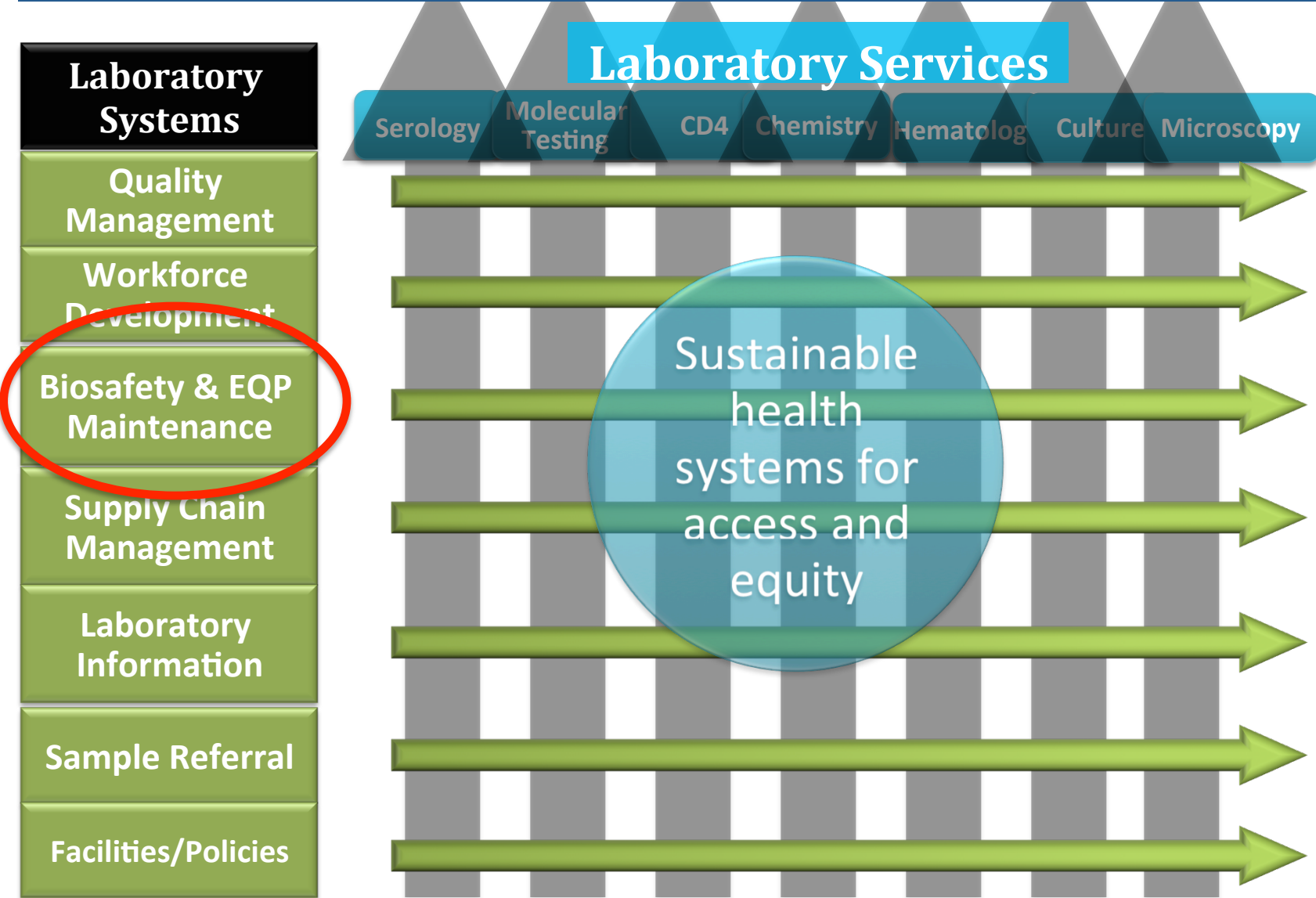
# **BIOSAFETY**

## **THE ASLM RESPONSE**

1

Sustainability

# Strengthening Systems For Multiple Disease Prevention and Control





# What is needed?

- **Standards**
  - Clear definition of laboratory biosafety standards and mechanisms of accountability (WHO, CDC, IFBA)
- **Investment case**
  - Develop the investment case and sustainable financial models for biosafety programs
- **Funding**
  - Incorporate biosafety requirements into national laboratory strategic plans and budgets

# “Institutionalized” biosafety

- Through its network of partners, ASLM is supporting
  - An update of laboratory network requirements to meet GHSA priorities
  - An update of national laboratory implementation plans in 17 African countries.
- These plans will incorporate a focus on biosafety and are the basis of national operational plans and budgets.

# 2

## Measuring Gaps

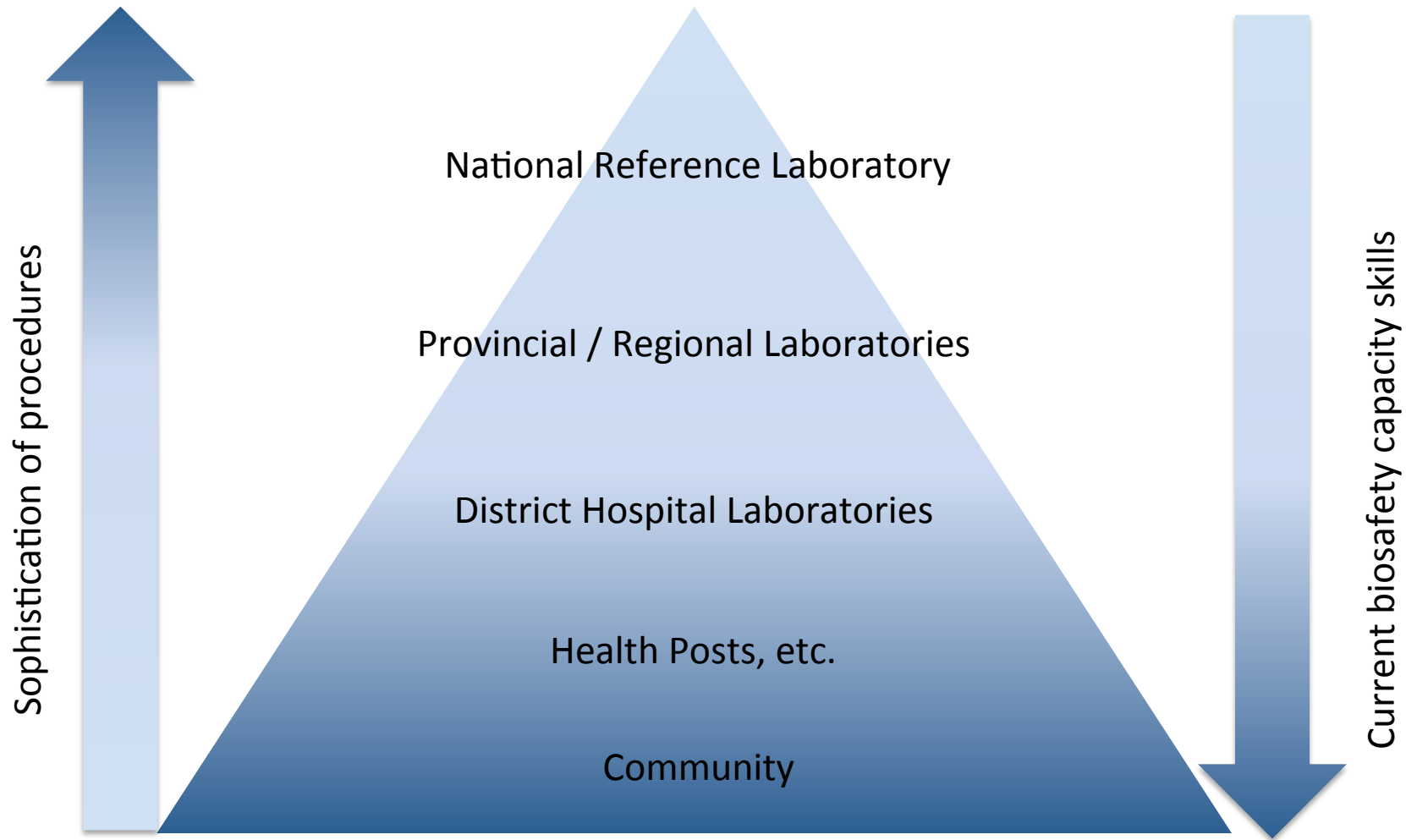
# Biosafety Assessment

- Standard, objectives measures of biosafety capacity and compliance need to be routinely implemented
- ASLM and its partners are developing a graded scorecard of laboratory network GHSA functionality and readiness based on WHO and other assessment tools
- The tool will be used to identify gaps in biosafety capacity across laboratory networks in African countries

# 3

Fill Gaps

# Biosafety risk exists at all levels of the health system but capacity is unequally distributed



# ASLM Community Laboratory Initiative

- ASLM and partners are developing a training package for community and lay health workers
- The training focuses on the core elements of biosafety for safe sample collection, packaging and shipping
- The training will be piloted by end 2015 and implemented in at least 3-5 countries in 2016

# Biosafety cabinet certification

- The majority of biosafety cabinets in African public health laboratories are not routinely serviced and certified
- Certification skills and maintenance spare parts are concentrated in South Africa, mainly in the private sector
- A classic “*supply and demand*” problem



# Biosafety cabinet certification

- ASLM is mapping certification capacity across Africa and investigating mechanisms to reduce the imbalance:
  - Training certifiers in gap areas and building a mentorship program in collaboration with the private sector
  - Developing an accessible database of BSC certifiers

4

Awareness

# Awareness

- Behavior change is the core of successful biosafety programs
- However, compliance with biosafety standards is low amongst healthcare workers

# Awareness

- ASLM uses its communications platform to build biosafety awareness amongst large numbers of healthcare workers
  - E-mail communications to 15,000 healthcare professionals in Africa and elsewhere
  - Quarterly Lab Culture and GHSA Newsletters
  - Scholarly articles in African Journal of Laboratory Medicine
  - Social media discussions on Twitter, Facebook
- Biosafety trainings
  - Accra October 26-30: Regional Biosafety Workshop hosted NMIMR and supported by the CDC Influenza Division
  - Biannual ASLM conference workshops and seminars

Thank You