

Dear Colleagues,

During the past 10 years, I have had the privilege of creating and consolidating the national chapter of International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) in my home country, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to become an active member of the Africa-ILAE. These two positions gave me the tremendous opportunity to help raise awareness both nationally (DRC) and regionally (Sub-Saharan Africa) on the importance of fulfilling ILAE goals on epilepsy through dissemination of knowledge, promotion of research, education and training to improve services and care to people living with epilepsy especially on treatment gap reduction as that the latter is a major barrier to epilepsy care. With colleagues in Africa and the ILAE Management Committee, we were able to have authorities for African Ministries of Health in the submission and endorsement of the Resolution WHA 68.20, which emphasizes the importance of surveillance systems to capture the overall global burden of epilepsy and inform measures to improve access to care for people suffering from epilepsy.

I have made every attempt to have Africa-ILAE establish collaborative links with other international research and training organizations to clear paths toward improving our understanding of mechanisms underlying the pathogenesis of Epilepsy. This has certainly helped strengthen the sustainability axis of ILAE programs. For the upcoming years, establishing functional and fruitful networks between ILAE and other scientific organizations will be crucial to securing our finances. Furthermore, the inclusivity of chapters from all other continents remains an essential step to understand specific needs of each region in terms of training, education, research, and advocacy. Also, strengthening the fight against stigma towards people living with epilepsy and their families remains a priority and should be addressed through local ILAE gatherings and/or social media.

Last and not least, I am convinced that establishing a network of relevant stakeholders including active ILAE members is key to public awareness activities and decision-making process to improve care for epilepsy across the globe.