The 4th African Epilepsy Congress was held at the Imperial Resort Beach Hotel, Entebbe, Uganda between 22nd to 24th August 2019. A total of 244 delegates attended the meeting, including the Presidents of ILAE and IBE, Profs Sam Wiebe and IBE Martin Brodie, respectively.

The congress provided an opportunity to share knowledge on the diagnosis, social issues, treatment, and challenges mitigating against epilepsy care and the way forward. Emphasis was placed on the role of sociocultural and economic aspects of epilepsy on the continent. Eleven plenary presentations, 73 abstracts were submitted out of which 50 presented as posters.

The congress was declared open by the Director of Clinical Services Uganda Ministry of Health, Dr. Charles Olaro on behalf of the Minister for Health. Other events at the ceremony was a rich and colourful cultural display by the Ugandan Cultural Troupe. Thereafter, participants were led to the swimming pool side of the hotel where delegates had social interactions with good musical entertainment by the Troupe.

EPILEPSY FORUM

The 3rd Africa epilepsy forum took place on the 2nd day of the congress. The forum was established to bring together advocates, PWE and professionals in Africa as a way to improve epilepsy care on the continent.

The meeting was co-chaired by the presidents of Africa ILAE and IBE Drs Angelina Kakooza and Jacob Mubumbate, respectively. Forty-five representatives of different organizations and institutions from African countries attended. A representative of the African Union also attended the meeting.

The forum rose with a call to action against epilepsy that:

a. address the multiple needs of people with epilepsy, including but not limited to access to train Personnel, antiepileptic medications, information, age-appropriate social assistance, quality education, safety, security and access to justice.
b. educate and train health and social care professionals about Epilepsy,
c. educate the general public about epilepsy as a universal neurological, non-communicable and treatable condition.
d. Eliminate stigma and discrimination in all spheres of life, particularly in villages, at school and the workplace,
e. encourage incorporation of prevention and treatment of epilepsy in national plans for other relevant health issues.

LAUNCHING OF THE AFRICAN YOUNG EPILEPSY SECTION

The official launching of the “Young Epilepsy Section” (YES) Africa was held in a Town Hall meeting on the last day of the congress. It was co-chaired by Professors Helen Cross (UK) and Jo Wilmshurst (South Africa). The outgoing Africa representative (Dr. Musa Watila) introduced “YES” to the audience, and explained its aims and how to get involved.

The launching was supported by the Next Generation Taskforce (NGTF) of the ILAE.

After the hall meeting, members of YES Africa met and elected a new African representative and four regional leaders, namely:

i. Naluca Mwendaweli (Zambia) YES-Africa regional representative.
ii. Samuel Angwafo (Cameroun) Central Africa
iii. Tichavika MuoyoFiri (Zimbabwe) Southern Africa
iv. Cadnelle Affognon (Senegal) West Africa,
v. Chantal Kuyubatuma (Rwanda) East Africa
vi. Dr. Watila the past YES-Africa representative as Ex-officio
ILAE-IBRO EPILEPSY SCHOOL

A jointly organized one-day ILAE-IBRO epilepsy school took place on the 21st August 2019 (a day before the congress). The aim of the school was to improve participants’ basic and clinical knowledge of epilepsy, and to foster collaborations among students and the faculties. Twenty-nine young Africans attended and 5 faculties participated in the training. Bursary awards were offered to some of the participants.