

Dr Melody Asukile – ILAE Africa Committee Election Statement

The burden of epilepsy is highest in our region, Africa, and this is compounded by huge diagnostic and treatment gaps. However, our continent is rich in its diversity, tenacity and resilience. Despite the limited numbers of specialists, innovations such as telemedicine and artificial-intelligence tools are revolutionizing the way we provide care for people with epilepsy. Furthermore, now more than ever, we are listening to people with lived experience, so that we can work towards change that is useful for them. And this must be especially true for Africa where our cultures and relationships are unique to others in the world.

I am a Zambian adult neurologist and epileptologist, and all the issues mentioned above are on my mind. I would love to be a member of the ILAE Africa Committee so that together, we can continue the great work of those before us, and promote education, collaboration and listening. I have been a direct beneficiary of many of the ILAE's educational offerings, and it would be such an honour to be able to give back.

I believe I could contribute greatly to this committee because of my background working with both the ILAE and other national and international neurological associations. With the ILAE, I serve on the Research and Innovation Taskforce and have played an active role in exploring how to bridge the gap between basic/ pre-clinical scientists and clinicians. I believe basic and pre-clinical epilepsy research is a big area that needs support in Africa. I also serve on the Acute Symptomatic Seizure and Epilepsy in the Elderly taskforces. In Zambia, I am the president of the local ILAE chapter, Zambia League Against Epilepsy, and the treasurer of the Neurological Association of Zambia. I am a board member of the African Academy of Neurology. I also serve on education and global engagement committees of the International Federation of Clinical Neurophysiology, American Neurological Association and the World Federation of Neurology. This broad experience will allow me to contribute meaningfully to our committee and prepare us for collaboration with other associations working towards similar agendas.

Two areas I hope to see grow during my tenure as a committee member would be an increase in regional epilepsy training fellowships and an increase in regional collaboration on a variety of research projects in line with the Intersectoral Global Action Plan Against Epilepsy agenda.

I am truly grateful for this nomination and look forward to working with the Africa Committee.

Sincerely,



Dr Melody Asukile

President, Zambia League Against Epilepsy

Member, ILAE Research and Innovation Taskforce

Member, ILAE Acute Symptomatic Seizure Taskforce

Member, ILAE Epilepsy in the Elderly Taskforce