

REVISED DOCUMENT for conference agenda, website, and presentation.

INTEREST CONFERENCE CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct sets out the framework to support the inherent value in supporting a harassment free, diverse and inclusive INTEREST Conference for everybody, regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, parental status, marital status, age, sexual orientation, disability or illness (physical or mental), physical appearance, body size, race, ethnicity, religion (or lack thereof), national origin, political affiliation, socioeconomic status or background, and technology choices.

Anyone connected to the conference is expected to respect this Code of Conduct and we expect cooperation from everyone to help ensure a safe environment for all.

1. Diversity and Inclusivity

The INTEREST Conference is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity and inclusion for everybody connected to the conference at all levels, including employees, speakers, participants, partners, sponsors, endorsers, and other stakeholders. We create, nurture, and sustain a global culture of inclusion by respecting and listening to different viewpoints, opinions, thoughts, and ideas to meet the needs of our stakeholders and improve the quality of our conference.

We are making a strong effort to include an appropriate representation of women and racial/ethnic minorities and people from resource limited settings. During the past live conferences we have obtained funding to provide scholarships for travels and accommodation for approximately 38 oral and mini-oral abstract winners from the African Continent.

We are creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for persons with disabilities and special needs. We are providing the possibility to identify any special need prior to the conference. Further, we are hosting physical/in-person programs at venues which accommodate access for persons with disabilities and will work with persons with disabilities in advance to make their experience optimal.

Efforts to attain appropriate representation will be specified and carried out during the selection of our scientific chairs, session chairs, speakers, the international conference committee, abstract winners, panelists, and participants.

Anybody who would like to provide advice, feedback, or pose a complaint regarding diversity is welcome to write to the recipients of this application Drs. Guido Ferrari (gflmp@duke.edu), Kwasi Torpey (k.torpey@aighd.org) and the local organizer Dr. Esperanca Sevene (esevene68@gmail.com). During each conference, an anonymous evaluation survey will be available where such feedback can be shared.

2. Harassment

The INTEREST conference is dedicated to providing a harassment-free conference experience for everyone. We do not tolerate harassment of persons connected to the conference in any form. The details of this code of conduct will be provided by the organizers during the opening of the event.

Everybody is expected to adhere to the following conduct standards:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect at all times
- Support the participations of individuals with different needs, abilities, and/or obligations
- Foster collaboration and encourage various perspectives
- Seek out perspectives from participants with different experiences and backgrounds
- Be open-minded and listen when given constructive feedback regarding others' perception of your conduct
- Avoid any slang, idioms, phrases, or terms that might not translate across cultures
- Sexual language and imagery are not appropriate for any conference interaction, including networking events, plenary rooms, online chats, opening and closing events, Twitter and other online media. Granted, we realize that given the subject matter of the symposium there will be discussion of issues pertaining to sexuality, sexual behavior and marginalized populations. We maintain that there is a distinct difference between sexual harassment and discussion of sexual issues as they pertain to HIV. Nevertheless, any use of sexual language that remains outside the bounds of the mission statement, goals and integrity of INTEREST 2023 is strictly unacceptable.

2.1 Reporting Procedure

Any person who believes to be the victim of inappropriate conduct, including sexual or other forms of harassment, or that a colleague or INTEREST Conference affiliate has been the subject of harassment, should promptly report the incident to the followings: 1) the Drs. Guido Ferrari (gflmp@duke.edu or text to +1-919-308-3502), Kwasi Torpey (k.torpey@aighd.org) or text to +2348039556684 and the local organizer Dr. Esperanca Sevene (esevene68@gmail.com or text to

+258823035060); and/or 2) in person to INTEREST Conference staff on premises; and/or 3) US National Institute of Health-Human Health Services Office for Civil Rights (HHS OCR) using this link for instructions ([Filing a Civil Rights Complaint](#)).

To ensure a prompt and thorough investigation of the complaint, the complainant should provide as much information as is possible, including the names, dates, locations and steps taken. An individual making a complaint may be asked to put the complaint in writing. All involved parties should take care to keep concerns confidential and only disclose information on a need-to-know basis.

In the event that an individual feels that their physical safety is in jeopardy, we encourage to contact the appropriate law enforcement agency to make a report.

It should be noted that individual may also report the situation directly to the US National Institute of Health-Human Health Services Office for Civil Rights (HHS OCR) using this link for instructions ([Filing a Civil Rights Complaint](#)) as well as using the following link for the NIH's site ([Find Help webpage](#)).

3. Assessment of allegations and action

The Local chairs, Scientific Chair and Co-Chair, Principal Investigator will constitute the committee's members who will investigate any allegations immediately it is reported and recommended appropriate sanctions. Anybody violating these conduct standards may be sanctioned or expelled from the conference without a refund at the discretion of the conference organizers. Where the offence will be deemed criminal in nature, it will be reported to the law enforcement authorities. In the unfortunate event that the offender is a member of the leadership of the event, we will remove the individual as an INTEREST committee member and restrict from attendance at future INTEREST Conferences.