**The 15th GLOBE Africa Virtual Regional Meeting, 17 March 2020,**

**GENERAL REPORT**

This year the 15th GLOBE Africa Regional Meeting was scheduled to take place in Mossel Bay, South Africa. Due to the coronavirus pandemic the GLOBE Implementation Office (GIO) and the Africa Regional Coordination Office (RCO) had a discussion to carefully consider the viability of the GLOBE Africa Regional Meeting in South Africa. Some of the participants had also expressed their concerns about traveling to and from the meeting (South Africa and other countries in Africa had confirmed many cases, as well as the South African government's planned to repatriate 185 South Africans from Wuhan, the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak in China). Several meeting participants have learned that they were now unable to attend. David Overoye's travel to the meeting has been cancelled, due to NASA's cancellation of all non-mission critical flights. The NORC evaluator for the Zika Project, has also cancelled international travel to this meeting. Also of concern is that many participants would be on flights that are on Ethiopian Airlines, which has ongoing flights to China with all flights transiting in Addis Ababa, and this may amplify the risk to passengers. After much consultation and careful consideration, the decision was made to cancel the 2020 GLOBE Africa Regional Meeting and the Zika Project Meeting.

In place of the GLOBE Regional Meeting, an alternative of a Zoom call was scheduled. Mark Brettenny, RCO, had sent a Doodle poll named "GLOBE Africa Regional Meeting" to all participants to gauge their availability for the call. The Doodle poll was filled by all participants and the date of 17th March 2020 was set for the virtual GLOBE Africa Regional Meeting and 18th March 2020 for the Zika Project meeting through a zoom calls. Ms. Mindi DePaola (GIO), who is coordinating the project, communicated with participants from the focus countries on that effect.

The objective of this 15th GLOBE Africa Regional meetings was to:

* ***work towards greater participation, cooperation, collaboration and innovation to strengthen the GLOBE program in the Africa region, and***
* ***align in country activities to the Strategic Objectives of the GLOBE program***.

Apart from Dr. Tony Murphy, GLOBE Implementation Office Director, Mr. Mark BRETTENNY the Regional Coordination Office Director, and a team from the NORC evaluator for the Zika Project GLOBE, most of the Africa region country coordinators and representatives (representing 15 GLOBE countries), attended this event, according to the following:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Names** | **Designation** | **Phone number** | **Email addresses** |
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The following GLOBE countries from the region did not attend: Guinea, Mali, Cape Verde, , Tanzania, Ethiopia.

The meeting was coordinated by Mr. Mark Brettenny, and Dr. Tony Murphy was in attendance.

Mr. Mark BRETTENNY made the opening remarks of the meeting and communicated the agenda. He also introduced Dr. Tony MURPHY by welcoming him at the meeting. Tony took the floor and talked mainly about GLOBE Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic. Clearly almost all existing events are impacted by the current world situation. However staff members of the GLOBE Implementation Office continue to work from home and are addressing the myriad changes to events as well as communication about them.

The following campaigns initiated are suspended:

1. [Water Bodies IOP](https://www.globe.gov/web/water-bodies)
2. [Zika Education and Prevention Project](https://www.globe.gov/web/globe-mosquito-project)
3. [Urban Heat Island - Surface Temperature Field Campaign](https://www.globe.gov/web/surface-temperature-field-campaign)
4. [Trees around the GLOBE Campaign](https://observer.globe.gov/do-globe-observer/challenges/trees-challenge-2020)
5. [Mission Mosquito](https://www.globe.gov/web/mission-mosquito) While the Trees Around the GLOBE and GLOBE Mission Mosquito campaigns have been suspended indefinitely in response to the worldwide pandemic, the campaign teams have been working tirelessly to shift gears to a safe approach that does not involve field work.  Also Tony encouraged participants to join these upcoming webinars: April 14, 2020 @ 1:00pm EDT (5:00pm UTC, 7:00pm CEST): GLOBE Student Tree Research Extravaganza: Students from around the GLOBE share their amazing tree research. <https://www.globe.gov/web/trees-around-the-globe/overview/webinars>

Regarding the **25th Anniversary GLOBE Annual Meeting**([link](https://www.globe.gov/news-events/meetings_symposia/annual-meetings/24th-annual-meeting)) he said that registration for the GLOBE Annual Meeting in Washington DC July 12-16 has been suspended. The meeting itself is under discussion with NSF sponsors. But the **Earth Day at GLOBE** ([link](https://www.globe.gov/news-events/globe-events/earth-day/earth-day-2020)) which marks the 25th Anniversary of the GLOBE Program will not be suspended. It will be digital this year regarding the Earth Day observations. He informed that GIO along with NASA sponsors at NASA headquarters are engaged in a major initiative in celebrating Earth Day outdoors and observing this day at home. They have created a webpage ([link](http://www.globe.gov)) which will be available for visit on Earth Day, 22 April 2020, to view a video slide show of historic images sent in by the GLOBE regions at the request of the GIO. But before that people will find announcements of new development, information about all the changes taking place, and what activities such as webinars will continue, links to indoors activities and indoor education materials for Earth Day as well as resources for sustained periods. NASA is providing substantial efforts to provide activities, films, podcasts and broadcasts from NASA science live, **Earth Day at NASA** ([link](https://www.nasa.gov/content/earth-day-2020)). Delve into the NASA Earth Day [toolkit](https://www.nasa.gov/content/earth-day-2020-50th-anniversary-toolkit) to find activities you can do indoors on Earth Day.

He also mentioned that for the IVSS 2020 Africa region had submitted 15 research projects (more than we’ve ever had!) out of about 250 projects submitted from all around the world.

Tony finished by inviting each participant to take care of itself and family.” The current situation is a test of our humanity” will he said.

After this Mr. Cornell LEWIS communicated on the GLOBE Website changes, interaction, administration tools. The presentation is available online on the Africa region web page:

<https://www.globe.gov/web/africa/home/documents>, located in the 2020 Africa Regional Meeting folder. Then, he answered couple questions from CCs.

Tony came back and talked briefly about the Country report template and general feedback to RCO, with reference to the content of the 2019 Country report and put in perspective with the GLOBE 2018-2023 strategic plan which had been translated in French and will be available online soon (he thanked Ylliass for accepting to do this task)

Ms. Mindi DePaola Zika Project coordinator informed the audience that the project is suspended as Tony said. The lenses delivery is also suspended, but they encourage individuals to continue the data collection with respect to their national policies.

Mark took the floor to make a summary and invited each country to give information about the Covid 19 situation and the policies set by governments in order to face the virus spread, also to provide a national summary of Zika project regarding participating countries

Then each country took the floor to present. After Benin, Kenya, Togo, Ghana, South Africa, Cameroon, Nigeria, Madagascar and Senegal (with Ylliass making translation), Uganda, Botswana, Liberia, Gambia, informed the audience about what is going on in their countries. Essentially all these countries had reported cases of corona virus, and a range of prevention and containment measures against the spread of the pandemic are set up. Breakdown, social distancing and closure of land and air borders remain fluid as countries confirm cases.

Regarding the zika project the main trainings (CMTs and/or LMWs) were completed in all participating countries. They were expecting to continue with the next phases but due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the project had been suspended. Lenses delivery also had been suspended.

Mark then shared the regional opportunities and plans. He finished with his closing comments. All participants were happy to attend and participated in this virtual meeting.

**Mark also set the platform the Zika meeting of 18 March 2020. All countries would participate in the first part of the meeting, they would then leave and only the focus countries would stay on.**