

**24th Annual General Meeting & Scientific Symposium and the 54th Annual General Meeting of The West African Postgraduate College of Pharmacists (WAPCP)
Held at the Kairaba Hotel, Banjul, The Gambia, 12th–16th March, 2012
Communiqué**

The 24th Annual General Meeting and Scientific Symposium of The West African Postgraduate College of Pharmacists (WAPCP) was held at the Kairaba and Paradise Suites Hotels, Banjul, The Gambia from 12th-16th March, 2012. The theme of the Conference was “Poverty, Disease, and Drugs in Regional Development.”

His Excellency, Sheikh Prof. Dr. Alhaji Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh, President of the Republic of The Gambia and Commander-in-Chief of The Gambian Armed Forces, the Special Guest of Honor to the Meeting was represented by the Honourable Fatim Badjie, Minister of Health and Social Welfare, The Gambia. Also present were the Honourable Ministers for External Affairs and International Relations; Youth and Sports; Works and Infrastructure; and Minister of Interior — Messrs Momoudou Tangary, Abduolai Jammeh, Francis Mboge and Sheriff Gomez respectively. Members of Diplomatic Corps present were also present. Other dignitaries present included: WHO representative, Dr Thomas Sukwa, Director of National AIDS Secretariat, Mr Alieu Jammeh, Deputy Director of Health services, Dr Adama Demba, Program Manager, National Malaria Control Program, Mrs Adam Jagne Sanko and Representatives of the Sister West African Colleges - West African Colleges of Surgeons, Physicians and Nursing.

The Minister of Health and Social Welfare of The Gambia, Honourable Badjie, on behalf of the President, formally declared the conference open at the Kairaba Hotel, Banjul, The Gambia. Professor Wilson Erhun delivered the keynote address on the theme: Poverty, Disease, and Drugs in Regional Development. Lectures on the sub-themes “Effectiveness of National Drug Policies in the West African Region” and “Drug Production in the Region: Constraints and Prospects” were given by Dr (Mrs) Ogori Taylor and Dr. Paul Lartey respectively. Poster and

podium presentations were made by Fellows of the College.

Meeting deliberated on the theme and sub-themes of the Symposium and other contemporary health related issues and the Meeting:

1. Inducted fifty-two (52) Fellows of the College by Examination and one (1) elected Fellow of the College.
2. Noted the recognition of the Fellows of the College as consultants in Nigeria and Ghana, and called on the other member countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia to do the same.
3. Noted that poverty, disease and inappropriate use of drugs constitute the tripod of underdevelopment and that pharmacists are well suited to contribute to regional development through effective and efficient management of drugs and public health education.
4. Observed that to fully harness the potentials of the pharmacist in regional development, governments in the region should be committed to the training of competent pharmacists, to make-up for the shortfall in the WHO recommendation for the region, which is a ratio of one pharmacist per 2000 clients for optimal healthcare delivery.
5. Opined that National Drug Policies should address the pharmaceutical needs of both the majority and minority groups such as those suffering from neglected tropical diseases and the rising incidence of non-communicable diseases.
6. Indicated that The WAPCP is committed to the continuing success of national drug policies, however there is

a need for proper consultation, dialogue and negotiations with all interested groups and stakeholders during the drug policy development and implementation process. A strategic implementation plan is also paramount for an effective National drug policy

8. Noted an urgent need to review the current National Drug Policies in the region to accommodate important concepts such as pharmacovigilance, pain management, essential drug programme and access to medicines as a fundamental human right.
8. Noted that the potentials and benefits of viable pharmaceutical manufacturing companies in the region cannot be overemphasized including strict regulation to attain and maintain high quality standards and reduction in the influx of substandard medicines.
9. Recognized the constraints and challenges of drug production in the region which tended promote foreign competitive advantage. Meeting recommended amongst others, the setting of target dates for harmonization

of regulations in the region, strengthening medicine regulatory authorities, reducing tax burden, improving access to financing for upgrading facilities and WHO prequalification and encouraging patronage of local manufacturers

10. Proposed the establishment of a West African Medicine Regulatory Agency to ensure compliance by local pharmaceutical manufacturers with accepted standards of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) in pharmaceutical manufacturing.
11. Also proposed the establishment of a West African Pharmaceutical Research and Development Promotion grant to support R&D initiative through public-private partnerships toward novel medicines.
12. Meeting expressed profound gratitude to the government and good people of The Gambia for their kind hospitality to the delegates.
13. Resolved to hold the 25th Annual General Meeting & Scientific Symposium of the College in Freetown, Sierra Leone in March 2013.

Signed

Professor 'Fola Tayo, FPCPharm
President, WAPCP

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