



# WEST AFRICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS



## ***47<sup>th</sup> Annual General & Scientific Meeting***

***30<sup>st</sup> Oct-1<sup>st</sup> Nov 2023(Hybrid format)***

### **COMMUNIQUE**

#### **PREAMBLE**

- The 47th Annual General and Scientific Meeting of the West African College of Physicians, hosted by The Togo chapter, was held from 30<sup>th</sup> October to 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 at Palais des Congres, Lome, Togo.
- The LOC Chairman and College Vice-President Chapter Chairman Togo Dr Yawo D. Atakouma gave his welcome address.
- College President Dr Rose Jallah Macauley addressed Members and Fellows in which she strongly encouraged new Members and Fellows to stay and work in the region.
- Honourable, Minister of Health, Public Hygiene and Universal Health Coverage of the Republic of Togo, Prof. Moustapha Mijiyawa, delivered a speech and declared the ceremony open on behalf of the government of the Republic of Togo
- Sister Colleges namely National Post-Graduate Medical College of Nigeria, Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons, Sierra Leone College of Physicians and Surgeons, South Africa College of Physicians, East, Central and Southern Africa College of Physicians, and West African Postgraduate College of Pharmacy gave their goodwill messages. Notable goodwill messages were also presented by the Director General of West African Health Organization and the World Health Organization Togo Representative.
- The Theme of the Conference: “Health workforce migration and impact on attainment of SDGs in West African” was thoroughly explored in the keynote addresses, symposia, plenary sessions, oral presentations, and poster presentations.
- A total of 1,190 participants (510 in-person and 680 virtual) attended the meeting from 12 chapters. There was also active participation from UK, Switzerland, US and South Africa.
- The academic activities of the meeting included the following:
  - The Mabayoje College Lecture, titled “***Dementia in the West-African sub-region: Challenges of Care and beyond***” was delivered by Dr Adesola Ogunniyi on behalf of the Faculty of Internal Medicine.
  - The Training symposium on the theme “***Cultivating Excellence in Postgraduate Medical Education: Exploring Opportunities and Mitigating Threats in West Africa***” was presented by Dr Albert Akpalu (Ghana); Dr Taiwo Obindo (Nigeria); Dr Afolabi Lesi (Nigeria); Dr Ibi Erekosima (UK).
  - The College Symposium presented by the Faculty of Community Health with the theme “***Putting a round peg in a round hole’: Adopting the Health Systems***



***Building Block Approach to Improve the SDG Scorecard for the Sub-Region”.***

Topics covered included: Health Systems Building Block: A Situation Analysis of the West-African sub-region; Human Resources for Health: Addressing Challenges and Building Capacity for Retention; Quality & Delivery of Service: Forecasting changes and providing services that meet evolving demands; Governance, Leadership and Finance in Health Systems: Driving Change and Accountability; Health Information, Products & Technology: Enhancing Health System Responsiveness through Digitalization, and Innovations for Evidence-Based Decision-Making in West Africa and was presented by Dr Obioma Uchendu (Nigeria), Dr Emilia Udofia (Ghana), Dr Sartie Kenneh (Sierra Leone), Dr Musa Duworko (Liberia), and Dr Effua Usuf (Gambia).

- A plenary session with the theme ***“Innovations in Health to Improve Universal Health Coverage”*** was expertly presented and provided additional scientific information to further explore the theme.
- Scientific sessions in which 36 oral and 12 poster presentations relevant to the theme and subthemes were held in three parallel streams.
- A total of 259 new Fellows and 434 new Members in the medical specialties of Community Medicine, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Laboratory Medicine, Paediatrics & Psychiatry were inducted at the opening ceremony. A total of 17 Fellows by election were also inducted during the closing ceremony.
- College prizes were presented to 10 Members and Fellows.
- In-person participants enjoyed the social events including the welcome cocktail and the conference dinner.
- The College strategic plan for 2024-2028 was also launched.

**OBSERVATIONS**

- Health worker migration cuts across disciplines and among all health workers affecting all countries.
- Various governments have not kept their health investment pledges required to achieve their sustainable development goals (SDG). This would improve the various health indices and economic situations in the member countries and prevent trained health workers from seeking so-called “greener pastures”.
- Human resource is a major determinant of health service delivery in the sub region. Africa contains 18% of the global population, 30% of the health burden and 5% of the health workforce. Human Resource for Health retention is therefore vital for achieving the SDGs.
- The West African Subregion is additionally burdened by fragile health systems.
- The fight for retention of the health workforce can only be won if the technical and financial stakeholders synergize their efforts.
- Medical Specialists need to acquire additional competences in leadership, advocacy, and professionalism.
- Dynamic two-way strategic alliances, partnerships, and collaborations in the form of North-South and South-South collaborations, and trainee exchanges need to be strengthened to improve capacity building and subspecialty training development.
- WACP is growing in influence in Africa through strategic connections with Francophone and more recently Lusophone colleagues for training physicians in Africa.
- College needs to ensure global best practices in training and accreditation including integration of Artificial Intelligence and other modern technologies to improve quality of training and thereby improve retention.



- There is need to shift in research focus to translational research and innovation (including AI adaptations).
- The increasing incidence of dementia is a concern and there is need to emphasize prevention, health education of the populace and consideration for novel models of care like the creche system.
- The College Strategic plan requires all Fellows, Members and Officers to commit to its full implementation.
- The College notes the strategic support of WAHO in implementing the strategic plan and the Human Resource for Health retention strategies.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Recommendations to Governments and other stakeholders*

- Governments should live up to the Abuja declaration and meet the levels of investment in health required to achieve the SDGs.
- Governments need to urgently address the health workforce migration through a multi-pronged approach to stem the loss of the critical building block in already stressed health systems in the subregion.
- Governments must ensure that investments and budgetary allocations to health match actual performance and action on ground through accountability mechanisms.

### *Recommendations to College*

- College should incorporate global best practice skills needed to enhance the influence of medical specialists in Training curricula.
- College should implement the new strategic plan and commit to its full dissemination and continued advocacy.
- College should increase engagement with Governments with regards to investment in health.
- College should make commitment to appropriate digitalisation, modernization and innovation of processes to deliver high quality services.

## RESOLUTIONS

That the West African College of Physicians is committed to :

- Working collaboratively with governments and other stakeholders to provide an environment that will increase retention of trained Human Resource for Health in the region.
- Engaging actively through advocacy to Governments, to increase investments in health in line with the Abuja declaration.
- Improving the performance of trainees in health governance, ethics and professionalism
- Pursuing and implementing dynamic two-way strategic alliances, partnerships, and collaborations to boost training and research initiatives.
- Resourcing and implementing fully the College's new strategic plan.
- Working towards optimization of digitalization, technology and innovation that enhances healthcare delivery and supports training in line with best practices.