

WEST AFRICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
43rd ANNUAL GENERAL AND SCIENTIFIC MEETING
Cotonou, Benin Republic
3rd – 8th NOVEMBER 2019

COMMUNIQUÉ

PREAMBLE

- The 43rd Annual General and Scientific Meeting of the West African College of Physicians was held at the **PALAIS DE LA GRATITUDE, Abomey- Calavi, Benin republic from 3rd to 8th November 2019.**
- The Minister of Health, Republic of Benin, **Prof Benjamin HOUNKPATIN**, representative of the Minister of higher education & scientific research, **Prof Raphaël DARBOUX**, representative of DG WAHO, **Prof Abdulrahman SOW** and representative of DG CAMES, **Prof Edouard NGOU-MILAMA** were in attendance.
- The Minister of Health, Republic of Benin, **Prof Benjamin HOUNKPATIN** declared the meeting open on Monday, the 4th November 2019.
- The Theme of the Conference was **“Health and environment in the perspectives of the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDG)”** and the subthemes were:
 - ***‘Post-Graduate Training: meeting the needs of the subregion’***
 - ***‘Medical Emergencies in the subregion’***
- Six hundred and three (603) delegates and medical students, and over 30 guests from 13 Chapters: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo attended the meeting. Presidents of sister Colleges, the National Post Graduate Medical College of Nigeria (NPMCN), the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Liberia College of Physicians & Surgeons, the West African College of Surgeons, the West African College of Pharmacist, and the West African College of Nursing were also in attendance.
- The academic activities of the meeting included the following:
 - The **Mabayoje College Lecture**, titled **“Human Resource for health crisis in the West African sub-region: Implications for achieving Universal health coverage”** by Dr Christopher Ndukaife OBIONU on behalf of the Faculty of Community Health
 - The Annual College Symposium featuring: **“Environment & Non communicable diseases”** was presented by the Faculty of Internal Medicine. Topics covered included: ***‘Disorders of cognition in the elderly – environmental and genetic interactions’, ‘Air Pollution and Health risk’, and ‘Achieving quality in postgraduate education’.***
 - The College training symposium on postgraduate training in the sub-region with the topics :-
 - Harmonisation of curricula for postgraduate training in Francophone West Africa by Dr Abdoulaye DIALLO
 - CAMES and Quality assurance in medical training : challenges and perspectives by Dr Edouard NGOU-MILAMA: The Postgraduate medical training programmes in Anglophone West Africa by Dr Roger MAKANJUOLA
 - Post graduate medical training in West Africa: Perspectives and challenges by Dr Angela OKOLO

The postgraduate Medical training was evaluated and challenges faced by the trainees, trainers and institutions were discussed in details.

- There were scientific sessions in which over one hundred (100) scientific papers & posters relevant to the themes and subthemes were presented and discussed,
- Thirty eight (38) New Fellows and One hundred and Five (105) New Members in the medical specialties of Community Health, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Laboratory Medicine, Paediatrics & Psychiatry were inducted at the ceremony opening;
- Eight (8) New Fellows by election were also inducted at the closing ceremony.

The following Observations were made:-

- The West African Sub-region continues to face serious human resources for health crisis, made worse by political and economic challenges;
- The crisis is influenced by shortage of health professionals, brain drain, maldistribution of the available professionals, specialty imbalance, inadequate manpower development and inter professional conflicts;
- The integration of Postgraduate medical training in the subregion has made some progress in the areas of harmonisation of curricula and association of specialists, but is yet to achieve the desired mutual recognition of Postgraduate medical qualifications across the sub region;
- There is high attrition rate and low progression to fellowship of the College among residents in some chapters;
- Environmental factors including air pollution, ecosystem degradation, poor waste management and unhealthy lifestyles are important risk factors for non-communicable diseases and mental disorders in the subregion;
- The emergency response system in the sub-region is poor, resulting in unnecessary loss of life.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to Governments and other stakeholders

- Governments and other relevant stakeholders should improve resources for training & retention of healthcare professionals;
- Governments and employers should improve welfare packages and conditions of service for health workers to reduce brain drain;
- Governments should put policy in place to address maldistribution of health professionals, specialty imbalance and inter-professional conflict;
- Governments should ensure that their medical councils mutually recognise the Postgraduate medical qualifications in the subregion as harmonised by WAHO;
- Governments in the subregion should urgently put policies and measures in place to promote green economy, clean environment and health system strengthening through intersectoral collaboration;
- Governments should urgently put in place an effective and efficient emergency response system;
- Governments should create awareness on environmental pollution and mainstream environmental sustainability education into the educational curricula of schools.

Recommendations to the College

- The College should continue working with WAHO to complete the integration and harmonisation of the postgraduate training curricula in the subregion;
- The College should make strong advocacy to Governments and stakeholders on the need to address the menace of environmental pollution;
- The College should ensure that trainers and trainees are trained and certified in life support;
- The College should advocate strongly on the need to put in place an effective and efficient emergency response system;
- The College should collaborate with Governments and other stakeholders to train a critical mass of first responders.

RESOLUTIONS

That the West African College of Physicians is committed to:

- 1. Assisting the governments of the Sub-region to address the human resource crisis of the subregion through research, training, and advocacy;**
- 2. Providing the expertise of its members to governments to address the menace of environmental degradation in the subregion;**
- 3. Providing the expertise of its members to governments to put in place an efficient emergency response system and building a resilient health system;**
- 4. Working with WAHO to complete the integration and harmonisation of the Postgraduate training curricula in the subregion.**