

COMMUNIQUE

The Communique issued at the end of the 23rd meeting of the Forum of Postgraduate Medical Colleges of West Africa held on the 5th of August, 2019 at the Bella Cassa Hotel under the auspices of the Liberian College of Physicians and Surgeons.

The Presidents, Secretaries-General, Rector and Registrar of the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons (GCPS), Liberian College of Physicians and Surgeons (LCPS), the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria (NPMCN), the West African College of Surgeons (WACS) and the West African College of Physicians (WACP) held their 23rd meeting at the Bella Cassa Hotel on 5th August, 2019 to continue their deliberations on the future of Postgraduate Medical Education in Anglophone West Africa.

The Liberia College of Physicians and Surgeons is hosting this meeting for the first time.

The sister Colleges reported their activities since the last Forum meeting held in Accra, Ghana on the 4th of March 2019.

The meeting made the following observations:

1. The issue of validation and re-validation of Primary certificates has been considered across Colleges
2. LCPS has requested for reciprocity for its Primary examination with other sister Colleges
3. The curriculum of LCPS has not yet been harmonized through the West Africa Health Organization (WAHO)
4. Prospective fellows in training (from Liberia, Sierra Leone and The Gambia) are unable to take up training posts in Ghana and Nigeria due to the relatively high costs of training compared to East Africa and South Africa
5. There are still challenges with issues of leadership of medical laboratories between Laboratory Physicians and Laboratory Scientists in some countries in the sub-Region, including access to Laboratories by trainees in all Colleges with the attendant implications on standards of training of personnel, medical practice and certification of laboratory results across all specialities
6. Joint accreditations are yet to be fully implemented by the Colleges
7. Online courses on Research Methodology and Health Resource Management have been started by the NPMCN
8. Calendar of activities particularly for examinations and Annual General Meetings across Colleges is not streamlined.
9. The NPMCN is celebrating 50 years of postgraduate medical training in Nigeria in September 2019

After extensive deliberations, the meeting resolved as follows:

1. The validity period of Primary certificate should remain 5 years and can be re-validated for a further two years. All the Colleges are urged to adhere to this principle.

2. LCPS should start the processes for harmonization of her curricula to enable the discussions on reciprocity at the Primary level to begin.
3. A plan of action should be developed for the following countries with peculiar training needs: Liberia, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau, to enable them access Membership and Fellowship training programmes in the sub-Region. WAHO and other stakeholders should be lobbied to support this process with funding
4. Countries in the sub-Region should apply international best practices in the management of medical laboratories in terms of service delivery, training and leadership. This Forum will work with WAHO to facilitate this process.
5. The Forum should approach WAHO to establish a Desk to facilitate inter-Collegiate activities.
6. Joint accreditation guidelines should be harmonized by the Colleges with attention to cost sharing to facilitate implementation
7. Harmonization of joint Update and Revision courses should be pursued by the Colleges
8. Dates for Examinations and Annual General Meetings need to be streamlined across the Colleges
9. The Forum will support the celebration of the 50th anniversary of postgraduate medical training in Nigeria.

CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman for the meeting, Dr Benjamin Harris thanked members for attending and contributing to make the meeting a successful one. He was hopeful that when the meeting re-convenes in February/March, Sister Colleges of the Forum of Postgraduate Medical Colleges of West Africa would have made progress on various fronts by flagging the action points in the Communique for implementation by the Colleges, Ministries of Health, WAHO and other relevant stakeholders.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.40 pm with a motion by Prof J Plange-Rhule, Rector GCPS and seconded by Dr A. Akpalu, SG WACP.

Closing prayer was by Prof P Mshelbwala SG WACS

Dr Benjamin Harris	- President, Liberian College of Physicians and Surgeons
Dr. John Nkrumah-Mills	- President Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons
Prof. O.B. da Lilly-Tariah	- President, National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria
Prof. Yveline Houenou	- President, West African College of Physicians
Prof. Serigne Gueye	- President, West African College of Surgeons