

37TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM OF THE WEST AFRICAN POSTGRADUATE COLLEGE OF PHARMACISTS (WAPCP) HELD AT THE FREETOWN CITY HALL, FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE FROM MONDAY 7TH - THURSDAY 10TH APRIL 2025

COMMUNIQUÉ

The 37th Annual General Meeting and Scientific Symposium of the West African Postgraduate College of Pharmacists (WAPCP) held at the Freetown City Hall, Freetown from 7th to 10th April 2025. Participants came from five (5) Anglophone and five (5) Francophone member countries - The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone; Senegal, Cameroun, Benin Republic, Mali and Togo.

The theme of the Conference was "Emerging substances of abuse: implications for the West African region," with the sub-themes 'Tackling Kush in West Africa - What do we know and what can we do?' and 'Systems approach to dealing with substance abuse in West Africa.'

The opening ceremony and the investiture of new Fellows was Chaired by the representative of the Honourable Minister of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, Sierra Leone, Hon. Dr. Haja Ramatulai Wurie. Among other dignitaries that graced the occasion were the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Nigeria, Ms Daju Kachollom, and Professor Phillip Harrisen from Canada.

Goodwill messages were delivered by the following bodies/organisations: West African College of Physicians; West African Postgraduate College of Nurses and Midwives; West African Postgraduate College of Medical Laboratory Science; Ghana College of Pharmacists; Sierra Leone Postgraduate College of Pharmacists; Sierra Leone Council for Postgraduate College of Health Specialties; Sierra Leone Minister of Technical and Higher Education (represented); Ministry of Health, Federal Republic of Nigeria (represented by the Permanent Secretary); Liberia Medicines and Health Products Regulatory Authority; Ministry of Health, Sierra Leone (represented by the Director of Research); National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC); African Pharmaceutical Forum; and the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP)

Professor Foday Sahr, Director General, National Public Health Agency delivered this year's keynote address. The sub-themes were delivered by Professor Noel Wannang of the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, University of Jos, and Dr. (Mrs.) Martha Gyansa-Lutterodt from Accra, Ghana.

At the end of the four-day meeting, Conference:

1. Admitted Eighty-four (84) new Fellows into different Specialties in Pharmacy practice.
2. Affirmed that substance abuse poses a grave and severe danger to the region and called for urgent multilateral measures to address this unfortunate menace.
3. Stated that prevention is the most cost-effective strategy towards substance abuse, and urged member States to focus their limited resources on prevention of substance abuse.
4. Noted that weak law enforcement and corruption serve as enablers of substance abuse.
5. Noted with great concern, the challenge member States face with porous borders, lack of regional cooperation, and insufficient public awareness/sensitization programmes that are targeted at reducing the incidence of substance abuse.
6. Reiterated the need for Member countries to set up research committees that would be tasked to generate meaningful data that would lead to actionable interventions.

7. Advocated a systems-approach towards curtailing the menace of substance abuse that incorporates enhanced regulation of supply chain, treatment and timely rehabilitation of abusers, social integration and monitoring of treated individuals, and enhanced penalties for offenders to serve as a deterrent.
8. Affirmed that crucial to curbing the menace of substance abuse is provision of jobs and development of recreational centres that can serve as alternatives to substance abuse. Governments of member states should therefore be encouraged in this area. The use of social media should be maximised to reach the teeming youth population.
9. Noted the integration of five Francophone and one Lusophone countries into the WAPCP at the moment, and urges more vigour at ensuring that more countries from the region come on board.
10. Performed the investiture ceremony of His Excellency, Rtd Brigadier President Julius Maada Bio of Sierra Leone as an Honorary Fellow of the West African Postgraduate College of Pharmacists.
11. Expressed profound appreciation to the Government and the good people of Sierra Leone for their warm reception and hospitality towards the hosting of this year's conference.
12. Decided to hold the 38th Annual General Meeting and Scientific Symposium and 68th Council meeting in Senegal.
13. Elected the following officers to serve the College in 2025 - 2027 the biennium:

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| I. | Professor Hasipha Tarpeh | President |
| II. | Professor Mahama Duwiejua | 1st Vice president |
| III. | Dr Fatoumata Jah Sowe | 2nd Vice President |
| IV. | Professor Olufunsho Awodele | Secretary General |
| V. | Dr Ben Botwe | Deputy SG |
| VI. | Dr Michael Lahai | Treasurer |
| VII. | Professor Noel Wannang | Editor -in- Chief |

Alhaji Murtada Sesay, FPCPharm
President, WAPCP

Prof. Ibrahim Oreagba, FPCPharm
Secretary General, WAPCP