



REPORT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL COUNCILS OF AFRICA:
ACHIEVING THE HEALTH RELATED MILLENNIUM GOALS: THE ROLE OF REGULATORY BODIES

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REPORT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL COUNCILS OF AFRICA (AMCOA) 2011.

THE 15TH AMCOA CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN ACCRA AND SOGAKOPE, GHANA FROM 26TH TO 30TH JUNE 2011

PREAMBLE

The Association of Medical Councils of Africa [AMCOA] was established in 1996 with the purpose of supporting medical regulatory authorities in Africa in the protection of the public interest by promoting high standards of medical education, registration and regulation, and facilitating the ongoing exchange of information among medical regulatory authorities.

The objects of AMCOA are:-

- (a) for representatives of medical registration authorities in the region to share views and exchange information on matters of common concern;
- (b) to offer a forum for member bodies to liaise with each other in regard to the standards for registration of medical practitioners and, where applicable, other health-care personnel;
- (c) to promote liaison among member bodies in regard to the standards of education and training of health professionals registered with the respective medical councils;
- (d) to offer a forum for member bodies to share views on relevant legislation relating to the control of health-care professionals;
- (e) to promote adoption of shared and common views through communication with and recommendation to member bodies.

INTRODUCTION

1. The increase in the importance for African regulators to meet regularly and exchange ideas as a means of promoting the health of the population of Africa and maintaining the integrity of the professionals cannot be overemphasised. Out of eight Millennium Development Goals, four directly relate to health and it has been noted with concern that a number of countries are lagging behind in the implementation and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
2. The theme for the 2011 conference: ***“Achieving the Health Related Millennium Development Goals: The Role of Regulatory Bodies”***, was guided by the need for the Regulatory Bodies to define their role in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by African countries in the African Continent especially with regard to the impact on health care provision.

The conference was opened by the Honourable J.Y.Chireh, Minister of Health, on behalf of His Excellency Professor John Evans Atta Mills, the President of the Republic of Ghana and chaired by the Honourable Professor J.S. Nabila, member of Council of State of Ghana and President of the National House of Chiefs.

The scientific session of the conference commenced with the sharing of country experiences in the areas of regulation, training, registration and standards as they impact on health related MDGs. This provided the basis for the group work which addressed the four areas as stated above. Each group session was led by a facilitator and enabled the sharing of experiences in the four content areas with the aim of identifying common themes and challenges as well as developing recommendations for best practices. The groups presented the results of their work after which, discussions were entered into and a way forward determined on each of the areas.

SUMMARY OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS

CAPACITY BUILDING

In order to strengthen the capacity of Regulatory Bodies to carry out their mandate, the following is recommended:

1. Human resources should be strengthened by:
 - a. the development of organograms that clearly indicate established positions; and
 - b. the development of detailed job descriptions for all categories of personnel listed in the organogram, to enable recruitment of appropriately qualified personnel.
2. Regulatory Bodies should be adequately funded to enable them to meet their targets with respect to their mandates by:
 - a. strong advocacy for realistic budget allocation and strategic planning; and
 - b. developing innovative mechanisms for resource mobilisation.
3. There should be a strong advocacy with respect to:
 - a. developing partnerships between the various national, regional and international strategic partners;
 - b. funding and resource allocation to healthcare delivery facilities and training institutions;
 - c. development of Human Resource for health;
 - d. continuing professional development with a positive bias in assigning credits to programmes whose content emphasise law, ethics and MDGs;
 - e. networking regulatory authorities, training institutions and other health facilities, to facilitate sharing of information and best practices.

TRAINING

Regulatory authorities should:

1. decide on the knowledge, skills and behaviours required of graduates, with emphasis on content that addresses the health-related Millennium Development Goals;
2. set the standard of competencies that students need to achieve at qualifying examinations or assessments;
3. insist on suitably sized and appropriately equipped facilities for training;
4. be responsive specifically to concerns about scientific education, clinical skills, partnership with patients and colleagues;
5. be committed to improving healthcare and provide leadership; and
6. establish accreditation criteria that would ensure that:
 - a. teaching and learning opportunities provided allow students to meet the set requirements; and
 - b. the standard of competencies set by Councils is maintained by medical schools at qualifying examinations.

REGULATION

In order to ensure the effectiveness of Regulatory Bodies, the following is recommended:

1. increase public awareness of Regulatory Bodies and their role in ensuring that the public is protected;
2. the law governing regulation of medical and dental practice should be updated and such reforms should take the MDGs into consideration;
3. establish strong disciplinary procedures that will discourage malpractice and misdemeanour amongst health workers and discourage fake health workers;
4. Regulatory Bodies should be involved in the accreditation of training facilities;
5. Regulatory Bodies should be empowered to close down facilities that do not comply with standards set by the Council; and
6. Regulatory Bodies should closely work with education and training providers, to ensure the delivery of high quality training.

STANDARDS

In order to ensure quality health care, Regulatory Bodies should set and maintain standards for:

1. the delivery of medical education with renewed emphasis on the MDGs;
2. professional development of health practitioners;
3. the training of trainers; and
4. clinical education reflects the changing patterns of healthcare and provides experience in a variety of clinical settings.

REGISTRATION

In order to provide credible and reliable registers, Regulatory Bodies should:

1. establish a system of assessment for registration that ensures practitioners have appropriate training, qualifications and other standards set by Council;
2. carry out thorough background checks to establish eligibility of individuals for registration;
3. ensure a practitioner's fitness to practice before registration;
4. ensure that requirements for renewal are such that practitioners possess the necessary knowledge, skills and competence; and
5. ensure that public and private health care facilities are accredited and registered before they are used as training sites or service delivery facilities

NEXT STEPS

	Steps/Activity	Date
1.	Compilation and circulation of Final Report	29 June 2011
2.	Acknowledgement of receipt	29 June 2011
3.	Approval by Council	October 2011
4.	Briefing of Sector ministry for support in implementation of recommendation	November 2011
5.	Time table for implementation	February 2012
6.	Submission of Quarterly Reports to AMCOA	May 2012
7.	Evidence-based report on progress of implementation of recommendations	September 2012