



2016

REPORT ON THE 20TH ANNUAL
CONFERENCE FOR THE
ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL
COUNCILS OF AFRICA

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1. PREAMBLE

The members of AMCOA meet on an annual basis to discuss means of ensuring an integrated process of medical regulation, standardization/harmonization of education and training, the enhancement of quality healthcare, etc.

The vision of the Association of Medical Councils of Africa [AMCOA] is to be globally recognised as the leading organisation for regulatory bodies in protecting the public and guiding health professions in Africa.

The primary purpose of AMCOA is to support 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.

2. APPROACH TO THE REPORT

This report is a summary of events over the 5-day conference, which comprised of:-

- i. Pre conference workshops and technical meetings;
- ii. Scientific conference; and
- iii. Annual General Meeting.

Under Section A, the report will address the pre-conference workshop and technical meetings and the overall outcomes thereof.

Under Section B, the report will further address the scientific conference and the key issues covered in the oral presentations made by member countries. It does not attempt to address each presentation made during the meeting but rather seeks to highlight areas, which were duly considered and placed into the final AMCOA protocol as best practices for possible application by its members.

Under Section C, the report will focus on the highlights of the Annual General Meetings as well as the proposed way forward for AMCOA activities.

3. INTRODUCTION

The 20th Annual Conference of the Association of Medical Councils of Africa was proudly hosted by the Medical Council of Malawi (MCM) at Makokola Resort, Mangochi, Malawi.

The focus of this year's conference was on the Medical and Dental malpractice in the 21st Century.

In line with the AMCOA mission, the conference facilitated ongoing exchange of information among regulatory authorities within the region as well as the development of protocols for addressing medical and dental malpractice (including Code of Conduct, Professional Misconduct Inquiry processes, Regulation in Resource-limited settings and Migration of Health workers).

The health regulatory authorities following countries were represented:

- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1. Botswana | 9. Rwanda |
| 2. Ghana | 10. South Africa |
| 3. Kenya | 11. South Sudan |
| 4. Lesotho | 12. Swaziland |
| 5. Liberia | 13. Uganda |
| 6. Malawi | 14. Zambia |
| 7. Mauritius | 15. Zimbabwe |
| 8. Namibia | |

4. SECTION A | PRE CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

4.1. AMCOA SUB COMMITTEE MEETINGS

AMCOA Sub Committees embarked on a revision of their respective strategic, operational plans and terms of reference, which focused on the following aspects:-

- a. Where the committee was now;
- b. Committees' activities and plans in line with AMCOA's vision, mission and strategic goals;
- c. Committees' key performance areas /deliverables; and
- d. Committees' capacity to delivery on a new strategy including human resources and financial resources.
- e. Finalisation of Committee Terms of Reference
- f. Review any other supporting policies or guides deemed necessary for the functioning of the sub committee.

The following committee's reports were completed and presented to the Annual General meeting for approval namely –

- Finance Committee (FC)
- Education, Training, Research and Practice Committee (ETRC)
- Communication, Promotion and Marketing Committee (CPMC)
- Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)

4.2. PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP AND TECHNICAL MEETINGS

Presentations were made by various stakeholders who included Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) wherein the Capacity Building was discussed, covering the aspects of Governance, Ethics and Professional conduct. The following issues were highlighted -

- Charter for Council and Board Members
- Conflict of Interest
- Dispute Resolution
- Meeting Procedures
- Ethics

- Powers of the Committee of Preliminary Inquiry
- Professional Conduct Inquiry Process
- Development of Jurisprudence
- Appeals
- Legal Challenges emanating from Decisions of Councils, Boards and their Committees

AFRIDEP made another presentation on the Role of using Research evidence in Medical practice and Regulation.

5. SECTION B| SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

The conference commenced with a warm welcome by the Vice President of AMCOA who is the Chairperson of Medical Council of Malawi, Prof. John Chisi. This was followed by further words of welcome by the Chief of Health Services in the Ministry of Health, Malawi, Dr Charles Mwansambo and the AMCOA President, Prof George Magoha.

The official conference opening was undertaken by Dr. Peter Kumpalume, MP, Honourable Minister of Health in Malawi.

This was followed by an inspirational keynote address from Justice Anastazia Msosa, Senior Counsel and Retired Chief Justice of Malawi. This was also followed by enlightened presentations by Dr Humayun Chaudhry, President and CEO of FSMB (USA) and incoming President of International Association of Medical Regulatory Authorities (IAMRA); Prof Khama Rogo of World Bank and Dr Salmon Orero of AMREF Health Africa.

The conference then moved into interactive sessions, which focused on sharing of country experiences and group session in the following areas:-

- i. Code of Conduct for Medical and Dental Practitioners
- ii. Professional Misconduct Inquiries and its Processes.
- iii. Medical Regulation in Limited Resource and Complex Emergency Settings

5.1. WELCOME

Prof. Chisi, Chairperson of Medical Council of Malawi and AMCOA Vice-President welcomed the delegates to Malawi and to the 20th Annual AMCOA conference. He applauded the great support rendered by the Minister of Health, Dr Kumpalume, the entire Ministry to the conference and that of the Medical Council of Malawi.

Prof George Magoha, President of AMCOA, in welcoming delegates to the 20th AMCOA Annual Conference highlighted the challenges the African continent is facing as far as health professionals are concerned such as the scarcity of health professionals, brain drain to the West and East, the quality of medical education, the increase number of litigations.

He further advised that no single state can address these challenges on its own thus the need to ensure a common and coordinated medium through which medical regulatory authorities can share information and exchange best practices on these and other related matters as well as devise mechanisms to uniformly address these pertinent issues of common concern, even to the point of influencing policy decisions taken at the political level for the benefit of everybody in the African continent.

Prof Magoha reiterated that the health sector is one of the very demanding and sensitive areas. This is particularly given that it is the sector that deals with human life and matters of life and death. Unfortunately, the management of our patients does not always go the way it should for various technical and non-technical reasons. Thus clear rules and guidelines have to be in place to ensure timely and efficacious delivery of services to the needy parties.

In closing, Prof Magoha thanked the Malawi Government, Ministry of Health and Medical Council of Malawi, and various sponsors for the support given towards hosting this important conference and wished the delegates profitable and meaningful deliberations.

5.2. OPENING ADDRESS

The Minister of Health in Malawi, Hon. Dr. Peter Kumpalume, MP in his official opening address pointed out the importance of the theme of the conference “Medical and Dental Malpractice in the 21st Century”, since about a third of the deaths in the world are as a result of medical malpractice.

Hon. Kumpalume stressed the need for clear guidelines for good medical and dental practice, continued maintenance of the better standards of care for the benefit of the patient.

In closing, he challenged the delegates to the 20th AMCOA conference to devise ways in regulating the fellow professionals in curbing medical and dental malpractice in their respective countries.

5.3. KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

The keynote address was delivered by Justice Msosa, SC who is the retired Chief Justice of Malawi. Her presentation was on “Legal issues in Medical and Dental malpractice in Africa”. She alluded to the rising expectations of people against the rise in disease burden and low numbers of health professionals in Africa

She stressed that Medical Regulatory Authorities should protect the patients through ensuring provision of quality professional practice. She reminded delegates that HEALTH is a fundamental Human right, which should be enjoyed by all citizens without discrimination. She also said that Health is an ingredient of development.

Good professional practice is important in ensuring provision of quality healthcare. However, low number of professionals, lack of drugs and equipment hamper the delivery of good quality service, which is often perceived by the public as malpractice.

Quality healthcare in resource-limited setting can be achieved by effective and efficient regulation, and adherence to professionalism. In addition, the Law and Regulations are critical for protecting professionals from unwarranted cases.

She challenged the conference delegates to think of the following:

- How to align Regulatory systems with other Legal systems.
- How to align Regulations to the Rules of Natural Justice.
- How to integrate various health professionals in the Regulatory system.
- How to integrate regulation from students in training up to the level of professionals.
- How to move beyond discussion during this conference to the profession, putting the patient at the centre of the Medical profession.

After the Keynote Address, there were presentations by Dr Humayun J. Chaudhry, Prof. Khama Rogo and Dr. Salmon Orero.

Dr. Chaudhry said the importance of including consumers/public members in the Regulatory bodies, which was resisted in the USA in the early 1970s. He highlighted the importance of information sharing among regulatory bodies which is very critical in regulating professionals in a global village.

He stressed on the role IAMRA is playing in encouraging best practices among regulators worldwide by ensuring proper standards among professionals. He shared on the IAMRA plans to expand data sharing with other regulatory bodies and creation of international dataset of medical professions in the world.

He proposed further discussions during this conference and beyond on the ways of regulating Telemedicine and use of social media by medical professionals.

Prof. Khama Rogo stressed on the need to enhance Patient Safety in medical practice in Africa, which has shown to be arising from low attainment in minimum international standards by health facilities. He challenged the audience to address issues affecting improved patient safety, such as:

- Lack of integration among member countries due to cultural or colonial backgrounds.
- Weak capacity of regulatory bodies which are supported by Laws that are outdated.
- Limited Budgets which do not prioritise medical and dental regulation.
- Lack of embracing innovations to improve access to quality care.

- Slow uptake of ICT resulting in poor record keeping and lack of digitization.

He proposed enactment of legislation making membership of medical and dental associations a mandatory requirement. He pointed out the need for equitable distribution of healthcare resources to improve access especially for the poor and disadvantaged. Also he proposed the need for medical indemnity for all registered professionals to cover the rural poor client.

Finally, he encouraged member bodies to move beyond their regions and build integration links in Africa, improve the capacity and financial resources in the regulatory bodies and use their power in improving access of health care to the people.

Dr Orero presented on the Health workers migration in Africa. He highlighted the factors causing migration, the cost in training doctors in Africa, the impact on the healthcare system and what has to be done to address it.

He stated the World Health Organisation Code of Practice on International recruitment of health workers, which was adopted in 2010 at the World Health Assembly. However, there has been slow uptake and poor feedback from African countries. He encouraged AMCOA members to adopt and domesticate WHO code on health workforce migration and develop protocols for migration.

5.4. COUNTRY EXPERIENCES

The conference moved onto the presentation sessions, which were dedicated to sharing of experiences by member countries in the following areas:-

- **Zimbabwe**
Code of Conduct for Medical and Dental Practitioners
- **South Africa**
Professional Misconduct Inquiries and its Processes
- **South Sudan**
Medical Regulation in Limited Resource and Complex Emergency Settings

5.5. GROUP SESSIONS

The group discussions gave the attendees a chance to meet one another in a context that stimulates interdisciplinary interactions, and to foster post-conference collaborations. The delegates were divided into four groups and this platform enabled the further interactive sharing of member experiences under the four sub theme content areas.

The aim was to develop protocols for dealing with 'Medical and Dental Malpractice' and 'Migration of Healthcare Workers'.

5.6. SUMMARY OF GROUP SESSIONS

Following the group sessions, the draft protocols namely, "PROTOCOL ON MEDICAL AND DENTAL MALPRACTICE" attached as ANNEX 1 and "PROTOCOL ON MIGRATION OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS" attached as ANNEX 2 were formulated, extracts of which are tabled below.

The protocol was tabled to the Annual General Meeting, whereupon it was approved.

6. SECTION C| ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Highlights from the Annual General Meeting are -

6.1. ANNUAL CONFERENCES

The future Annual AMCOA Conferences were proposed as follows -

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------|------|-----------------------|
| i. | 21st Annual Conference | 2017 | Namibia |
| ii. | 22nd Annual Conference | 2018 | Lesotho/ South Africa |

7. CONCLUSION

In closing, the President, Prof G Magoha, thanked all the members and the secretariat for the support accorded to him and appreciated the fact that AMCOA has now been placed on a sound and solid footing to achieve its objects with the structures and plans that had been implemented during the 19th Annual Conference.

THUS DONE AND SIGNED AT MAKOKOLA RETREAT, MANGOCHI, MALAWI, ON THIS DAY, FRIDAY, 26TH AUGUST, 2016

	Country	Name	Signature
1.	Botswana	Dr K. Lekau-Tacheba	