

First meeting of the African Pharmaceutical Forum

At the inaugural meeting of the African Pharmaceutical Forum (APF) in April 2004, the proposed APF Constitution was adopted, and the first executive committee elected to maintain geographical and linguistic spread. The following were elected office bearers for the first two years of the forum:

President	Mrs Mabel Torongo (Zimbabwe)
Vice-president	Cisse Djita Dem (Mali)
Executive members	Moreira Chonguica (Mozambique), Oliver Hazemba (Zambia), Prof. Kam Su Kom (Cameroon), and Azubike Okwor (Nigeria),

Issues of hosting of the secretariat by Republic of Congo, membership fees and adoption of a budget were discussed. The challenge posed by language differences across the region was well recognised. There were well-researched presentations on Good Pharmacy Practice, the problem of illicit drug trade and counterfeit medicines, HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. These presentations formed the basis of the projects that were subsequently undertaken by the forum, with different countries assigned as leads, as follow:

- HIV/AIDS — Zimbabwe
- HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis — Mali
- Malaria — Ghana and Cote D'Ivoire
- Illicit drug trade and counterfeit medicines and tuberculosis — Nigeria

During the meeting, Zimbabwean Health Minister, Dr David Parirenyatwa, launched the revised Malaria Fact Card (revised) for Zimbabwe which was produced in three local languages (English, Shona and Ndebele) and the forum approved a statement on "The pharmacist and public health", which emphasised that the role of pharmacists in health care should extend beyond the supply and management of medicines.

The fifteen countries that were present at the meeting (Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe) became the inaugural members of APF. The signing of the acceptance of the statutes was witnessed by Mr Jean Parrot, FIP president, and Dr Rufaro Chatora, World Health Organization director, Division of Health Systems & Services Development. In his closing remarks, Dr. Chatora gave guidance on the correct procedures to apply for project support from the WHO.

APF objective

The original objective of the forum was to increase partnership dialogue, understanding and activity in different world regions, enabling the pharmacy profession to have a greater impact on improving pharmacy services and health by focusing on distinct local or regional needs.

This objective would be achieved with the following strategies:

- Mobilising pharmacists and pharmacy associations in the region to the new paradigm shifts in pharmacy practice.
- Collaborating with the WHO regional and country offices.

- Planning and executing national and regional projects that would have direct impact in improving pharmacists' roles in health care delivery.
- Training and retraining for pharmacists.
- Research and documentation.
- Increasing pharmacists' participation in public health.
- Publication and dissemination of healthcare information.
- Influencing review of curriculum for the training of pharmacists.
- Increasing the participation of pharmacists from the African region in FIP/WHO activities.

We proudly acknowledge our past presidents:

- Mabel Torongo
- Azubuike Okwor
- Anthony Akhimien
- Prosper Hiag