

Annual Report 2009



Brief Introduction

The Commonwealth Medical Association was established on 1969. The role of the Association is to promote, assist, and strengthen the capacities of the composite national medical associations of countries within the Commonwealth and provide leadership and services for the benefit of the health and welfare of the people within the Commonwealth.

The CMA is an independent civil society organization which is governed by the Council of Association. The Association is administered by the Executive guided by the decisions of the Council and it is committed to an open and transparent relationship with its stakeholders. In carrying out its constitutional mandate the Executive works closely with a diverse group of people and organizations including other health professionals and social services providers, private and voluntary providers nationally and internationally. The Commonwealth Secretariat and its funding agency, the Commonwealth Foundation remain the key stakeholders.

This annual report summarizes the work of the Executive from January 2009 to December 2009.

National Executive Council

1. Dr. Sundara Arulraj - President, *India Medical Association*
2. Prof A B Akosa - Immediate Past President
Ghana Medical Association
3. Dr. Oheneba Owusu-Danso - Secretary, *Ghana Medical Association*
4. Dr. Margaret Mungherera, - Acting Treasurer & Vice-President, Eastern,
Central and Southern, Africa region
Uganda Medical Association
5. Prof. Wole Atoyebi, - Vice-President, West Africa region
Nigerian Medical Association,
6. Dr. Jean Paul Tabone - Vice-President for European region,
Medical Association of Malta,
7. Dr. N. Arumugam - Vice-President for S E Asia/Australia region,
Malaysia Medical Association,
8. Dr. Ajay Kamar, - Vice-President for Central Asia region,
India Medical Association,
10. Dr. Solaiman Juman - Vice President, Canadian/Caribbean
Trinidad & Tobago Medical Association

Location

The CMA Office is hosted in the International Department of the British Medical Association with the following contact details:

Commonwealth Medical Association
International Department
BMA House
Tavistock square
London WC 1H 9JP
Telephone +44 207 383 6069
Fax + 44 207 383 6644
Email- cmaliaison@cma.bma.org.uk

The Liaison Officer could be reached in the office on Tuesdays or Fridays between 09.00- 14.30 Hours UK time.

Recruitment of a Liaison Officer

Ms. Janet Adrah was recruited as the new Liaison Officer in July 2009 to replace Ms. Rita Afriyie who left for her country after her studies.

Meetings

BMA Meeting in Edinburgh

The Annual Representative Meeting (ARM) is the British Medical Association's (BMA) key policy making meeting and the 2009 meeting was held at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, Edinburgh from 6-10 July 2009. The CMA President and the Secretary honoured the invitation of the BMA.

Whilst in the UK the President and the General Secretary took the opportunity and held separate meetings with the Commonwealth Foundation and Commonwealth Secretariat where on-going and new areas of collaboration and sponsorship were discussed.

The President and the Secretary also had a meeting with Martin Carroll, Deputy Head, of the International Department of the BMA to express CMA's appreciation of the continuous support that the CMA receives from the BMA.

Tanzania Workshop on Climate Change

The CMA in collaboration with the Commonwealth Foundation and under the local organization of the Medical Association of Tanzania organised a workshop on the theme: "Climate Change and Health" in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania for National Medical Associations (NMAs) on November 5 & 6, 2009.

The workshop deliberated on the following sub themes :

- An Overview of Climate Change and Health
- Changing Patterns of Disease and Mortality arising from Climate Change
- Impact of Climate Change on Vulnerable Communities and Groups- women, children, displaced populations etc
- A Regional Research Report: Impact of Climate Change on Health in East, Central and South Africa

- Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies on the Impact of Climate Change on health.
- Commonwealth Health Professional Alliance Survey Report on Climate Change
- 2009 Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting- A summary report
- Commonwealth Climate Change Action Plan
- Managing effects of Climate Change on Food Security, Water and Sanitation
- Sharing of experiences and collaboration with NMAs on strategies for advocacy on combating the effects of Climate Change on health- A Presentation by STPD, ComSec
- Country Experiences/Reports

There was also group work which focused on:

- Analysing and Defining the role of Doctors/Health Professionals
- Strategies for Advocacy by National Medical Associations
- Processes/Indicators for conducting vulnerability Assessment of Climate Change Health Risks
- Implementation of Adaptation Strategies and how to deal with the accompanying challenges

Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting

In November the President and the Secretary represented the CMA at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and the Commonwealth People's Forum (CPF) both which took place in Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago from 22nd to 29th November 2009.

Summarized report CPF

(the report below as captured is per CHAAG report on the CPF am not too sure if this covers the whole discussion)

Objectives

The main objectives of the CPF was Commonwealth support for the formation of a Patent Pool, the establishment of a Currency Transaction Levy (CTL) for Health and law reform and human rights as related to HIV and AIDS stigma and discrimination.

Activities:

1. To support a joint session between the Commonwealth People's Forum (CPF) Finance Assembly and Health and HIV Assembly to discuss the formation of a CTL for health.
2. To capitalise on the media access and attention surrounding CHOGM by holding a media briefing session to discuss the need for law reform so that Commonwealth member states can have laws that are compatible to effective public health responses.
3. To hold a second media briefing to capitalize on PM Browns recent declaration of support for Financial Transaction Taxes (FTT) to discuss the implementation of a CTL and the role that the Commonwealth can play.

4. To ensure that the wording got from the Civil Society Dialogue meeting in October for the draft CSO communiqué continued to get strong support at the CPF.
5. To lobby government representative and network among fellow CSO representatives, forging future contacts and briefing them on the CHAAG objectives.

Outcomes & Lessons learned:

1. The joint assembly at the CPF went well and it managed to get many people involved in what is a cross-cutting issue and therefore not only for the Finance Assembly.

Experienced CSO representatives observed that this was one of the best CPF's to date because it had a much more inclusive feel and wider groupings so that cross-cutting issues were discussed together as opposed to the many little separate grouping that have been known to occur in the past.

2. The most conclusive outcomes came out very well and the two media events were a big success, particularly the law reform session as the message was widely carried by the local radio stations and made headline news for both local, regional and global newspapers.
3. All three objectives of the CHAAG got such strong language in the CPF communiqué.

In terms of lessons learned, the only observations made was that given how crowded the CPF is and how busy everyone is pushing for their own objective, more pre-CPF networking and briefing is advisable for next time. Those in attendance whom we had meet before in the UK were already caught up on our issues and were quick to give their support and ensured inclusion of CHAGG issues in the CPF communiqué.

Summarised report CHOGM

The CHOGM was held under the theme “**Health and Climate Change: current risks and future challenges**” Presentations and documents presented at the meeting were on such important topics as;

- The Climate change and human health
- The health risks of climate change
- Developing effective adaptation strategies
- Mitigating climate, meeting MDGs, moderating chronic disease: the health co-benefits landscape
- Responding to the health impacts of climate change in the commonwealth

After a two day deliberations the meeting came up with the affirmations on Commonwealth values and Principles which affirmed:

1. its strong and abiding commitment to the Commonwealth's fundamental values and principles.

2. the special strength of the Commonwealth lies in the diversity of its membership, bound together not only by shared history and tradition but also by an ethos of respect for all states and peoples, of shared values and principles, and of concern for the vulnerable.
3. Its belief in the Commonwealth as a voluntary association of sovereign independent states whose pursuit of common principles continues to influence international society to the benefit of all. We are resolved to make the Commonwealth an even stronger and more effective international organisation as we look ahead to the rest of the 21st century.
4. Recall its earlier statements through which the Commonwealth's values and principles have been defined and strengthened over the years, including the Singapore Declaration, the Harare Declaration, the Millbrook Action Programme, the Latimer House Principles and the Aberdeen Principles.

Our Values and Principles

The meeting also reiterated its commitment to the Commonwealth's core values: (International peace and security, Democracy, Human Rights, Separation of powers, Rule of Law, Freedom of Expression, Developments, Gender Equality, Access to health and education, Good Governance, Civil Society) and its core principles of consensus and common action, mutual respect, inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, legitimacy, and responsiveness.

(Your input please)

President and Secretary Visit - Trinidad and Tobago Medical Association

While in Trinidad and Tobago the President and the Secretary honoured a special dinner organized in their honour by the Trinidad & Tobago Medical Association (TTMA). Issues of rejuvenation and active participation of TTMA in CMA activities were discussed.

The visit saw Dr. Solaiman Jumah (Immediate Past President TTMA) elected to the position of Regional Vice President for the Caribbean and Canada (a position which before then was vacant).

Kenya Medical Association

The President was unable to attend the Annual General Conference of Kenya Medical Association due to lack of funds.

Company House

The CMA is currently up to date with filling of all the necessary documents with the Company House.

Subscription Fees

Non payment of subscription by most NMA's continues to be a huge challenge. All NMAs are encouraged to pay up their annual subscription in accordance with the subscription demand notices issued.

Audited Accounts

The 2008 accounts has been dully completed and audited.

Common Health Newsletter

There has not been publication of the CommonHealth newsletter after publication of its maiden edition of in November 2008 as result of All NMAs are encouraged to file relevant news and notices on their activities for publication to increase publicity and enhance information sharing. National Medical Associations are advised to contact the CMA secretariat for further information.

Website

UpdatePlans are underway to bring the CMA website to an acceptable standard. The address is www.commonwealthmedics.org

22nd Triennial Meeting

The President and the Secretary has been in constant touch with the Medical Association of Malta to ensure a successful Triennial Meeting.

Conclusion

The CMA has made remarkable improvement in its strategic planning, as well as civil society engagements over the period under review. National Medical Associations receiving this report are welcomed to send comments and also make proposals to the Executive where necessary.