

WAHO EMPOWERS ADVOCATES FOR ADEQUATE FUNDING OF THE HEALTH SECTOR.

/EINPresswire.com/ In pursuit of its mission to support countries in mobilizing resources for funding health programmes within the ECOWAS sub-region, the West African Health Organisation (WAHO) recently witnessed in Monrovia, Liberia the inauguration of the country's health advocacy network.

This activity is a follow-up to the February 2010 meeting in Ouagadougou where it was recommended that countries within the ECOWAS sub-region should leverage advocacy initiatives targeting decision makers to facilitate the effective implementation of the financial resolutions and agreements for the benefit of the health sector.

Liberia has therefore joined the rank of countries Mali, Guinea Bissau and Togo in establishing its own health advocacy network comprised of members from the civil society organizations, the parliament and the Ministry of Health.

On the 13 and 14 September, 2012, the West African Health Organisation (WAHO partnered with Liberia's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, to organize a two-day strategic advocacy training for members of the network at the Eugene Cooper Conference Hall of the YMCA in Crown Hill neighbourhood of Monrovia

The advocacy training featured presentations by facilitators and interactive group work. Addressing the participants on the last day of the training, WAHO's Deputy Director General, Dr. Jeannetta Johnson stressed the importance of empowering advocates for health with appropriate skills as provided by the training workshop.

She said "Liberia's vibrant civil society remains a formidable tool in raising public awareness of health issues and securing the much needed support for increased Government spending in favour of the health sector"

Dr. Johnson enjoined participants to make good use of the skills learned during the training in making a difference to the health of Liberians. "Your performance as health advocates could serve as a model to be replicated in other West African countries" she added.

With the average health budget expenditures of ECOWAS Member States estimated at a low \$10

per person per year and in spite of the call by Heads of States and Governments to scale up budget allocation to the health sector to 15 percent of the national budget, most Member States are yet to achieve this target. In 2009, Liberia consecrated about 13.80 percent of its general expenditure to the health sector.

If the difficulty currently being encountered by a large segment of the West African population in accessing health services is to become a thing of the past, Governments will have to substantially increase their budget allocation to the health sector.

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