

AFRICAN PHARMACEUTICAL DISTRIBUTION ASSOCIATION (APDA) SEATS BOARD OF DIRECTORS, ELECTS CHAIRMAN, AND ESTABLISHES INITIAL LOCATION FOR ITS HEADQUARTERS

On Thursday, October 10th, the new African Pharmaceutical Distribution Association (APDA) got down to the business of positively impacting the pharmaceutical supply chain to ensure its safety and security on the African continent. This was the third meeting of the new association. Previous organizational meetings were held in Lusaka, Zambia in November 2018 and Accra, Ghana in April of 2019. Those meetings helped to determine the level of interest in such an association and, once that was validated, to establish a Steering Committee to manage the efforts required to stand up the association until a board of directors could be established and formal initial members identified.

The third meeting took place October 9th – 11th in Casablanca, Morocco and kicked off with the APDA steering committee assembling the first afternoon. Representatives from Algeria, Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa, along with IFPW and IQVIA, who served as advisors to the steering committee, meticulously planned the following days for the first-ever general assembly and board of directors meeting.



The general assembly meeting kicked off the next morning with individuals representing trade associations from, Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Egypt, Tunisia, Madagascar, and Morocco, as well as direct company representatives from Burkina Faso, Gabon, Senegal, Ghana, Sudan, Madagascar, and Ethiopia. After welcome remarks from GDPDP, the pharma distribution trade association in Morocco, and IFPW, meeting attendees heard presentations from IQVIA on pharma trends around the world with a strong focus on the African continent and from Rachid Lamrini on the challenges and opportunities in Moroccan pharmaceutical market.



All attendees then participated in a session led by the World Health Organization (WHO) on regulatory harmonization in Africa and efforts to ensure quality medical products are available on the continent. After a break, IQVIA led a panel discussion on manufacturer wholesaler relations and pharma distribution trends in Africa. Representatives from Merck, Imperial Logistics, and Kofikrom Pharmacy Ltd. (Ghana) led a lively discussion involving all meeting participants.

After a lunch break, each organization interested in membership provided a brief overview of themselves and their company or association. There were 10 Associations, 3 Companies and 3 Partners who expressed strong support and committed to membership. The association from Sudan and a potential direct member from Burkina Faso expressed support for APDA but indicated they would consider membership upon consultation with colleagues after they returned home.

Members interested in Board service were then identified and offered an opportunity to make additional remarks after which voting for the board took place by region, with the following directors being elected:

Organization	Name	Country	Member Type
ADPHA	DR ABDELOUAHED KERRAR	ALGERIA	Association
GPDP	MR LAHCEN SENHAJI	MOROCCO	Association
AGRIMM	MR MICHEL RAKOTON DRAINIBE	MADAGASCAR	Association
PLASA	MR TREVOR PHILLIPS	SOUTH AFRICA	Association
CHAMBER OF PHARMACY	MR ANTHONY KWAKU AMEKA	GHANA	Association
KOFIKROM Pharmacy Ltd	MR KOFI ADDO-AGYEKUM	GHANA	Company
POWDG	MR ERNEST OKAFOR	NIGERIA	Association
SIAP PHARMA	DR YOLANDE DJOMO	CAMEROON	Association
EURAPHARMA	MR KEN ACCAJOU	GABON	Company

After some discussion concerning representation of the board within francophone Africa, Diaware Ibrahima was elected to serve as an additional member of the Board to fill vacant seats and represent Francophone countries in West Africa. After the full board was seated, proposed revisions to the by-laws passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.

The first official APDA board meeting was held and the board approved and accepted the initial members of APDA as follows:

Organisation	Country	Member Type
ADPHA	ALGERIA	Association
GPDP	MOROCCO	Association
CHAMBER SYNDICATE	TUNISIA	Association
UNITED COMPANY OF PHARMACISTS	EGYPT	ASSOCIATION
AGRIMM	MADAGASCAR	Association
PLASA	SOUTH AFRICA	Association
CHAMBER OF PHARMACY	GHANA	Association
KOFIKROM Pharmacy Ltd	GHANA	Company
POWDG	NIGERIA	Association
Association de distributeurs Cote d'Ivoire	IVORY COAST	Association
Duopharm	SENEGAL	Company
SIAP PHARMA	CAMEROON	Association
EURAPHARMA	GABON	Company

One of the most important decisions the new association was where the association secretariat would be housed. A set of criteria had been established, and both Ghana and Morocco advocated for their respective countries. Morocco was selected to house the secretariat for a period of up to 12 months with the subsequent and permanent location(s) of APDA to be brought before the next General Assembly meeting for further discussion and consideration.

Lahcen Senhaji from GPDP (Morocco) was elected to serve as Chairman of APDA until the next General Assembly, and Ken Accajou (Eurapharma) and Kofi Addo-Agyekum (Ghana) were elected to serve as Co-Vice Chairman for the same period. IFPW and IQVIA have both been critical to the successful formation of APDA and both organizations expressed ongoing support for the Association. Each also pledged to assist with the transfer of information and workstreams from the Steering Committee to the Board.



Before adjourning the board of directors immediately began choosing the timing, location/method and format of the next meeting. In addition, conversations relating to recruitment of countries not represented in the initial membership will take

place as APDA is truly a Pan African association with the official language being both French and English. Any discussions around recruitment or future meetings will be centered around the objectives of APDA as outlined in the bylaws.

1. Defending and promoting the common business interest of its members;
2. Developing and sharing best practices, ethical standards and quality objectives concerning the storage and distribution of healthcare products
3. Acquiring, interpreting and disseminating information considered valuable for use by its members and others concerned for public health;
4. Assisting in the development of more effective and efficient means of distributing pharmaceutical and health related products for the benefit of the general public;
5. Advocating on behalf of the pharmaceutical distribution channel to governments, manufacturers, suppliers and medicine dispensing entities in the distribution of drugs and health related items; and
6. Cooperating with and contributing expertise to national and multinational organizations, both public and private, to promote the common interests of its members.
7. Leading initiatives to secure healthcare supply chains and prevent the infiltration of falsified or counterfeited products
8. Support efforts to establish national associations of wholesalers and distributors in Africa.

IFPW would like to express sincere thanks to our partner (and IFPW member), IQVIA, as their support has been critical in the progress made thus far. Additionally, IFPW would like to express gratitude to the four founding members and leaders of their respective associations, led the Steering Committee efforts until initial APDA members were approved and a board of directors seated. Our sincere thanks go out to Trevor Phillips from PLASA in South Africa, Anthony Ameka from the Chamber of Pharmacy in Ghana, Ernest Okafor from POWDG in Nigeria, and Abdelaouahed Kerrar from ADPHA in Algeria.



The reaction from attendees, post meeting, was quick and very positive. Mohammed Galal, Managing Director of United Company of Pharmaceuticals, Egypt said, "APDA could be a milestone in developing

the healthcare sector in the whole African continent. It could be a drive for development, quality of services provided to African nations.” Yolande Djomo from Cameroun stated, “APDA has helped me see more and different distributor practices in Africa. It is very good. I will do whatever is necessary to get more participants.”

But Nalini Nayak of Elpis in Ethiopia went one step further and challenged the new association to strive for more. He stated, “It was a well-organized and well-coordinated meeting, but more participation is required and awareness among other African countries who could not participate. That would be a good factor to improve. We need to go back to our countries and associations and help to give the masses what we received here and what other activities we are planning in the future so that the participation of the associations from all African countries will be more practical.”



The new association will now assume the tasks of recruiting new members, collecting the first round of dues from committed partners, and establishing and promoting a value proposition to potential partners who believe in the association and are willing to interact with members and provide financial sponsorship at upcoming events. A very important element of the association going forward will be identifying an exemplary paid executive who will ultimately oversee the efforts of APDA and take direction from the board of directors.

It is well documented that pharmaceutical supply chains on the African continent need improvement. It is also well documented that improved efficiency of these pharmaceutical supply chains can lead to better health outcomes. APDA and its members’ challenges are significant but for now the new association has a foothold in the African healthcare landscape from which it can build upon to have a lasting and positive impact.