

The World Psychiatric Association Regional Meeting in Abuja, Nigeria

Prof S Rataemane, Secretary General of the African Association of Psychiatrists and Allied Professions (AAPAP)

This meeting was held at the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Center in Abuja, Nigeria from 22 – 24 October 2009. It was organized jointly by the Association of Psychiatrists of Nigeria, African Association of Psychiatrists and Allied Professions (AAPAP) and World Psychiatric Association with support from the World Health Organization. This excellent meeting enjoyed active participation from a number of countries including the USA, Jamaica, Australia, UK & other European countries, South Africa, Ghana, Liberia, Kenya, Nigeria and other African countries. There was minimal support from the pharmaceutical industry but local support from various Nigerian Hospitals, Universities, private sector and Government sector was commendable.

The overall organization under the leadership of Prof Oye Gureje was excellent. There was a good selection of presentations for key note addresses and symposiums. The opening session was dedicated to the late Prof Ayo Binitie from Nigeria. It was marked by a thought-provoking presentation from the WPA President, Prof Mario Maj on "Depression vs Normal Sadness: towards the DSM-V and ICD-11." In the same session Prof N Sartorius took us through concerns and recommendations on "Strategies of mental health care in the 21st century".

Additional programs included a session chaired by Dr Frank Njenga and Dr Femi Olugbile on issues related to collaboration with the Royal College of Psychiatrists; training in child and adolescent psychiatry led by Prof Brian Robertson; leadership training for young psychiatrists led by Prof Norman Sartorius; and the WHO session on "Mental Health Gap Action Program (mhGAP)" led jointly by Prof Oye Gureje, Prof Mario Maj and Dr S

Saxena. The conference dinner was noteworthy for a presentation from Prof N Sartorius dedicated to the late Prof Adeoye Lambo.

The dinner concluded with an official hand over of the presidency of AAPAP from Dr F Njenga to Prof O Gureje.

In keeping with the theme of the conference "*Scaling up and reaching down – addressing unmet needs for service*", there were excellent scientific papers, evidence based presentations identifying gaps in the mental health services in Africa, and others addressing best practice in management of an array of disorders including schizophrenia, mood disorders, HIV related problems, PTSD, substance abuse and others.

A general assembly and an executive meeting were held in keeping with the constitutional requirements. Various future plans were discussed and recommendations for membership of the Association, membership of the Board and a series of future meetings were tabled for discussion. The following were confirmed:

- The next AAPAP meeting will be held in Khartoum, Sudan 10 - 12 December 2010
- The 2011 and 2012 AAPAP meetings will be in South Africa and Uganda but could be changed based on any new developments
- Individual membership fee of USD25 should be collected by national associations of psychiatry and forwarded to the treasurer of AAPAP
- The constitutional provisions allowing for the inclusion of representatives of Interest Groups/Task Forces in the Executive Committee will be implemented by inviting representatives from the Association of Young Psychiatrists. The President was also mandated to nominate at least one member of the Allied Professions to the EC
- Appointments to the AAPAP Executive and Board include:
President of AAPAP: Prof Oye Gureje (Nigeria)
Treasurer of AAPAP: Dr Fred Kigozi (Uganda)
Secretary General: Prof Solomon Rataemane (South Africa)
Ex-officio Members: Dr Frank Njenga (Kenya & past president of AAPAP)
Prof R Emsley (South Africa)
Prof CP Szabo (Editor-in-Chief: African Journal of Psychiatry)
Dr Abdallah Abdelrahman (Sudan)
Prof Mesfin Araya (Ethiopia)
- The next General Assembly to review the Association's activities and engage its membership will be held during the next AAPAP meeting in Sudan



Prof. Rataemane (Left) and Prof. Gureje (Right).