

CHAPTER THREE COMMUNIQUE

Preamble

The Association of Health Service Administrators, Ghana (AHSAG) at its 33rd Annual General Conference and Continuing Professional Education Programme held at Ho in the Volta Region from 18th-21st November, 2009 under the theme: ***'Towards the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals 4, 5 & 6 - the Role of Health Service Administrator'*** and having extensively deliberated on topical issues relating to the theme resolved as follows:

AHSAG appreciates the global efforts aimed at addressing poverty, especially in developing countries with the declaration and adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as strategy for addressing global poverty;

The Association further commends the Government of Ghana and its Development Partners, including NGOs for the commitment towards the attainment of the MDGs;

The Association recognizes the significant achievements chalked in the areas of prevention and control of HIV/AIDS & TB, Malaria, Maternal & Child mortality and general access to quality health care and commends health workers, particularly those in the deprived areas, for their sacrifice and unrelenting effort in this regard.

The Association, however, notes with grave concern the enormous challenges in the following areas in the implementation of strategies for the attainment of the MDGs:

1. 2015 As Deadline for the Attainment of the MDGs

The Association appreciates the impact of the MDGs on national development and wishes to draw the attention of the nation to the closeness of the 2015 target date for the attainment of all the MDGs and the need to apply some urgency towards attaining them from now on.

In view of the above, the Association calls on the Government to convene a national conference of all stakeholders to re-strategise on the way forward in achieving the MDGs and more importantly, sustaining the gains ever after.

2. Inter-Sectoral Collaboration and Partnership

Inter-sectoral collaboration and partnership are critical for the attainment of the MDGs. However, the Association notes with concern the weak inter-sectoral collaboration and partnership at all levels particularly at the District level in programming, implementing, monitoring and evaluating MDG strategies.

The Association hereby recommends that the MoH/GHS should ensure timely development of annual programmes of work that take into account relevant community-stakeholder inputs to effectively facilitate planning and budgeting at the District level.

District Health Directorates must ensure that all key health stakeholders including Local Government, NGOs and Communities participate actively in the annual health programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities.

The MoH should as a matter of urgency accelerate work on the new National Health Service Bill to effectively address the present inefficiencies in coordinating service delivery and referral management among implementing agencies to promote continuum of healthcare delivery in the country.

3. *Health System Strengthening*

The Association observes the inherent weaknesses in the health systems in relation to inadequate and unsatisfactory state of health infrastructure across Regions, limited and ageing fleet, insufficient diagnostic, emergency obstetric & neonatal care equipment and logistics for the implementation of strategies towards attaining the MDGs.

The Association recommends that Government should as a matter of priority commit additional resources to improve the state of health infrastructure, equipment and transport including ambulance service.

4. *Human Resource for Health*

The Association further notes with deep concern the lack of commitment and proactive approach of the MoH/GHS towards addressing geographical mal-distribution of health professionals in the country. This continues to pose a major threat to achieving the health related MDG targets.

The Association wishes to emphasize that merely training more health professionals and raising salaries in isolation will not resolve the current acute shortage of health professionals in the country unless conscious effort is made to put in measures to attract health professionals to the difficult/deprived areas.

The Association calls on the MoH to without further delay introduce differential incentive packages to attract critical health professionals to difficult/deprived areas.

Regional and District Health Directorates must also proactively engage District Assemblies and communities in the provision of residential accommodation to attract and retain health professionals in their respective regions.

5. *Single Spine Salary Structure (SSSS)*

The Association appreciates Government's commitment to address salary disparities in the public sector to improve workforce productivity with the impending implementation of the Single Spine Salary Structure. However, the Association recommends that due to the ever increasing workload on health staff following the implementation of NHIS, due consideration be given to the issue of fair wages for the health sector to serve as an effective tool for higher staff performance and retention.

The Association therefore urges the Fair Wages Commission to expedite action on all petitions submitted to it by stakeholders relating to the implementation of the Single Spine Salary Structure.

6. *National Health Insurance*

The Association further notes the undue delays in provider claims submitted for reimbursement by the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) and its practical implications to derail the progress towards the attainment of the MDGs.

The NHIA must promptly reimburse claims submitted by service providers. In this regard the NHIA must direct and ensure 60% -70% of claims submitted is paid upfront by Schemes pending completion of the vetting process.

7. *Health Service Managers*

The Association, recognizing the critical operational issues in the attainment of the MDGs, urges health managers at all levels to provide effective leadership and ensure prudent use of available resources in the implementation of MDGs strategies.

Health Managers must further promote team work and foster partnership with key health stakeholders at all levels.