

## 2023 WHO LIBERIA COUNTRY OFFICE STAFF RETREAT

15-17 February, 2023

The Farmington Hotel, Liberia



### THEME

“Contributing towards the improvement of the health and well-being of all Liberians in the context of COVID-19 and beyond”

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## 1. Background

As part of efforts to improve performance and contribution to Liberia's health and development agenda, the WHO Country Office in Liberia organised a 2-day retreat (attended by 51 staff members) at the Farmington Hotel in Margibi from February 15-17, 2023. The theme of this year's retreat was ***“Contributing towards the improvement of the health and well-being of all Liberians in the context of COVID-19 and beyond”***.

The objective of the retreat was to review and take stock of WHO's contribution to the health sector, review our performance for 2022 and strategize for 2023 in the context of COVID-19 and beyond. The retreat also provided opportunity to promote unity and team building among all WHO staff in Liberia.

This report highlights key activities and the recommendations from the staff retreat.

### 1.1. Main Objective

- To promote teamwork and improve performance in a competitive and diverse work environment.

#### 1.1.1. Specific Objectives

- Promote teamwork and social bonds among staff,
- Provide an enabling environment that will foster staff recreation and mental wellbeing
- Provide feedback on the WCO staff satisfaction survey
- Set the agenda for 2023 targeting an efficient result driven Plan of Action towards health and wellbeing
- Promote entrepreneurship among staff

### 1.2. Methodology

Presentations, group discussions, plenary sessions, informal interactions, and recreational activities were all used to accomplish the retreat's objectives. The retreat organizing team allocated time slots for games and team-building activities.

## The Retreat

### 2. DAY ONE



Figure 1 WHO Liberia CO- WR Dr. Clement Peter delivering opening remarks for the 2022 WCO Liberia Annual Retreat

#### 2.1. Welcome and opening remarks -Dr. Clement Peter -WR

In his opening remarks, Dr. Clement Peter- WHO Liberia Country Representative (WR) welcomed all staff to the retreat and thanked them for their hard work over the previous year, which culminated with the unexpected receipt of the Director General Team award for excellence, indicating that the Country Office's contributions towards the global COVID-19 vaccination targets did not go unnoticed. Dr. Clement highlighted the reason for the retreat, which was to take stock of priorities for the 2022–23 biannual work plan and, more importantly, have an opportunity to re-energize as a team. He emphasized the use of the 'five priorities' ('five Ps') for WHO - Promoting, Providing, Protecting, Powering and Performing for health - which emanate from the 13th General Programme of Work (GPW13), encouraging staff to use them as a guide as they implement activities in the current biennial and operational plan. Making reference to the functional review, he highlighted that most posts have been advertised, some have been filled, and that this is an ongoing process that will be finalized this year. He challenged the staff to work even harder in 2023, and the award should be a constant reminder of the need to achieve more with the available resources. He further reminded staff that as the country prepares for elections this year, as a WCO, we are hoping for peaceful elections in Liberia in 2023. He stressed the need to build a more agile team that is proactive in improving resource mobilization.

He also encouraged staff to develop a culture of exercising as individuals to enhance their health as part of their commitment to work-life balance. In his closing remarks, he wished the

team a successful retreat and said he was looking forward to the recommendations from the deliberations.

## 2.2. Keynote address on the retreat theme

By Dr. Bernice Dahn



The keynote speaker, Dr. Bernice Dahn, took the team into reflection on how the WCO Liberia can act differently to achieve the set goals with reference to the retreat theme. She challenged the team to leverage its experiences to enhance its contribution to the well-being of all Liberians, focusing less on what the country office is doing now and more on how things can be done differently to improve results. She encouraged the WCO to work across all sectors so as to tackle health problems holistically while leveraging on its comparative advantage in the context of COVID-19 and routine health services.



She encouraged the team to sustain strengthening of the MOH capacity towards improving the health system in the country. She further emphasised that the country office be more vigilant as new variants of COVID-19 may emerge and be ready to respond and realign its health priorities.

She further elaborated 5 key areas where WHO staff can do their work better- challenging them to become more creative where it counts and develop innovative- sustainable solutions, while leveraging on new developing capacities to address health challenges in Liberia. She also encouraged staff to measure progress through novel strategies and ensure plans are in place to monitor specific progress against set indicators. As the country is rebooting and shifting its focus from COVID-19, she encouraged the team to conduct more research and report on achievements based on evidence and data for the country's use.

*“There is room for improvement on data and research- lets improve how decisions makers value such data. The presence of transparent data sharing platforms will improve implementation efforts in Liberia's health sector”,* said Dr. Dahn.

### 2.3. Communicating our work

By Natalie Ridgard, Communications Officer at WHO AFRO

Natalie took the team through how the WCO can effectively communicate its work while contributing to the global goal of #HealthforAll. She reminded the audience of WHO's attributes, which are integrity and dignity for the global promotion of health for all populations. The creation of positive impact stories and the sharing of experiences in our work are critical for effectively communicating WHO's work. She emphasized the importance of keeping the audience in mind throughout the story development process so that a typical high school student can understand and retell it. She reminded the staff of the 5 Ws and 1 H that every impact story should answer: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How. She took the audience through the elements of an impact story which are:

#### Problem statement

- Demonstrate what the problem is in a comprehensive statement
- How is the problem affecting people's lives? The use of beneficiary voices and statements is important.
- Why is it important to solve this problem? Support your findings with statistics and comprehensive data. "Data gives the human story gravitas".

#### Action plan

- What is already being done to solve the problem?
- How will the problem be resolved technically and organizationally?
- What is the objective of the action being taken?

#### Results

- Show the impact of the health initiative in solving the problem
- Provide data and statistics to demonstrate the outcome
- Use beneficiary voices to emphasize positive change
- Summary (brief, about 30 words)
- Have a clear angle of what was improved and where there is need for further interventions.

She also presented on the importance of photos which underscore the story's content. Presented in the below table are important aspects to remember when taking photos for interventions and beneficiaries.

How to take good field photos/ videos	Composition of your photos	Do...
Photos 1) Keep steady	1) Rule of Thirds Use the gridlines on your phone screen 2) Background	...take photos of people in action ...depict beneficiaries and health workers in action

<p>Position yourself and avoid shaking the camera</p> <p>2) Light Light must shine onto your subject, adapt to outdoor and indoor lighting</p> <p>3) Focus Keep your phone on auto-focus</p> <p>Video</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composition</li> <li>• Sound</li> <li>• Length</li> </ul>	<p>Choose a background that provides context</p> <p>3) Clutter Remove things that might take away the attention from your photo subject</p>	<p>Don't...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>...use zoom</li> <li>...use flash</li> <li>... take photos of moving vehicle</li> <li>... use backlight</li> </ul>
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Impact stories are published in different channels, and the process of deciding which is the best channel for each individual story will be made in collaboration with the story developer, the communications officer, and management. She also pledged the continuous support of the Regional office in publishing WCO Liberia stories both on social media and the website as part of increasing the audience reach and showcasing the contributions from the CO. Moving forward, clusters committed to submitting at least two stories every quarter.



## 2.4. Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PRSEAH)

By Dr. Musu Duworko



*Figure 2: PRSEAH focal point Dr. Duworko taking the staff through a refresher session on PRSEAH and reaffirming the commitment to their obligations*

The Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PRSEAH) focal point- Dr. Musu Duworko, reminded participants that as a Country Office we hold power over people in countries we serve in and that power can easily be misused to do harm.



Figure 3: Participants engaging in deliberations on PRSEAH

The team was taken through the 3 strategic objectives of PRSEAH in accordance with the WHO PRSEAH AFRO Regional Strategy which are:

- To contribute to the WHO global strategy of building an organizational culture of zero tolerance for SEAH.

- Develop a speak-up culture where all affected victims feel safe.
- Raise awareness on SEAH among the WHO workforce and its implementing partners.

The staff were taken through a revision of the PRSEAH core definitions and encouraged to regularly read the PRSEAH code of conduct and ensure compliance. She also emphasized the importance of creating and maintaining a safe working environment culture at the WHO Liberia Country Office. Crowning it all, staff must sign the code of conduct and ensure they carry with them the PRSEAH pocket cards for reference of their obligations.

## 2.5. Outdoor activities

Winding up the first day, participants were engaged in various activities, including games (volley ball, basket-ball, egg race, sack race, packer pint, and lapper) walks, and aerobics that challenged their mental and physical abilities while learning and applying leadership skills and promoting their personal health and well-being. These activities were undertaken every day, starting with an early morning walk and ending with sporting events.



*Figure 4 WHO staff actively taking part in outdoor events at the retreat*

### 3. DAY TWO

The sessions of day 2 comprised of review of the 2021 retreat recommendations, repositioning of WHO to achieve results for 2023, feedback on staff satisfaction survey, entrepreneurship and presentation on the draft staff association work plan for 2023.

#### 3.1. Review of the 2021 retreat recommendations

By Letitia Nangwale

A review of the recommendations made in 2022 was made to take stock of how the WCO has progressed towards the commitments made. It was noted that overall, the WCO has done extremely well in following up on the implementation of the agreed recommendations, with a few that will be carried over to the coming year as follows:

- Operationalization of the change agent activities as a team. The change agent focal point was tasked to seek more guidance from AFRO on proposed innovative ways of attaining the required change as an office.
- Functional review- the process is still ongoing as some positions are yet to be filled, however operations and management will continue to support staff in preparing for the interview processes.
- Cluster meetings to be enhanced- as some did not take off in the past year.
- All new staff must understand how the office works including signing of all necessary documents like Code of conduct, PRSEAH etc.
- Other carry over recommendations include communicating our work better and team building.

### 3.2. Repositioning the WCO to achieve results for 2023- Group work By Cluster leads

The teams were grouped into their clusters to provide 5-6 critical actions to achieve better results



as guided by the WR. The following were

take-away from the group work:

- Development of strategic partnerships both internally (AFRO, HQ, UN Agencies) and externally (domestic and international donors) aimed at innovatively mobilizing resources.
- Clusters should reinforce resource mobilization efforts to support program work plans, including sustaining county office activities.
- Maximize compliance to administrative, finance, logistics, and procurement and HR procedures/processes to enhance implementation of program activities.
- Review the presence of WHO at the sub national level depending on the availability of resources and re-design our roles in the counties.



### 3.3. Feedback on the Staff satisfaction survey

By Alfonso King

A staff satisfaction survey is an integral component of team building that aims to ignite a conversation on better program delivery while taking into account how staff understand both the organisations and team goals. The exercise aims at capitalizing on team strengths and building on weaknesses while improving trust and transparency in order to achieve WHO priorities, and it also guides conversation on improvement for future interventions.

**Key parameters were measured with results as follows against the 2021 baseline:**

No.	PARAMETER	BASELINE % (2021)	RATING % (2022)
1	General working relationship and communication and as a team improved	93	72.9
2	Clusters internal relationship and communication improved	86	62.79
3	Working relationship and communication with Admin Improved	0	79.9
4	Communication and relations improved among the WCO team improved	0	76.8
5	Freedom of expression of ideas improved	0	81.4
6	Culture of learning and development of staff improved	69	97.7
7	Value contribution of team members improved	0	93.2
8	Staff well-being improved	24	81.4
9	Communicating of work improved	79	95.3

Moving forward, a team was appointed to look into the responses, categorise and analyse them for presentation to management, which would be further discussed in the next staff general meeting. For better insights, the team would also compare the results of the 2022 retreat with the 2021 findings to gauge progress.

### 3.4. Entrepreneurship

By Dr. Plenseh Diana Paye McClain

Dr. McClain presented on entrepreneurship, taking the team through what entrepreneurship is and how staff can be productive both as professionals and entrepreneurs. She emphasized that having an "entrepreneurial mindset" means thinking outside the box. She also defined an entrepreneur as someone who is willing to work for him/herself and self-manage. She further defined entrepreneurship in the context of health as the concept of developing and managing a health-related business venture in order to gain profit, which involves taking several risks in the corporate world. She shared the qualities of an entrepreneur as follows:

#### Skills

- Innovation
- Creative mindset
- Quality leadership
- Successful exploitation of new ideas
- Personality traits
- Optimism
- Initiative
- Drive and persistence
- Resilience

In conclusion, staff were encouraged to take advantage of the wealth of knowledge shared on entrepreneurship for their own self-development.

### 3.5. Staff Association 2023 Work plan

By Robert Kollie

Mr. Robert Kollie, president of the staff association, spoke about the association's financial situation and how staff members have contributed to the cause. Generally, staff are committed to the cause, with a few lagging behind who were encouraged to cover the gaps and be up to date. A presentation was made on the 2023 work plans for the association, and it was agreed that the activities needed to be recast within the mandate of the association. Moving forward, the association would meet with management to tease out activities for the year and brief staff at the next general staff meeting in March for their review and endorsement.

## 4. DAY THREE

### 4.1. Administration

By Akosua Spitta Ansah



Ms. Spitta Ansah took staff through a swearing of the WHO oath of office as a sign of recommitment to the mission and vision of the organization. Further to this she presented on WHO core principles and core values as listed below:

The WHO core ethical principles:

- Integrity
- Accountability
- Independence and Impartiality
- Respect
- Professional commitment

The WHO core values

- Trusted to serve public health at all times
- Professionals committed to excellence in health
- Persons of integrity
- Collaborative colleagues and partners



- People caring about people

She emphasised on the need for staff to internalize the principles and values while ensuring their application in their day-to-day work. She further presented on PMDS reporting for competencies and how participants can pitch their profiles in Stellis, and how to prepare for job interviews using the CAR/ STAR models.



Ms. Spitta Ansah also took participants through an orientation on the new Business Management System (BMS), which is yet to be rolled out. The BMS will migrate all WHO operating systems – including HR, capacity development, communication, procurement, etc into one hub. She took the audience through the BMS objectives, which are:

<b>Key objectives for BMS</b>	
One WHO	BMS will offer an easy-to-use platform providing harmonized processes across the 3 levels of WHO.

Improved user experience	Users will enjoy a modern, improved user interface accessible from one single port of entry
Fully integrated	BMS is integrated BMS is integrated across all systems and there is no duplication or re-entry of data for users
Digitized streamlined processes and workflows	Processes are digitalized and streamlined support by automated workflows
Dashboards, real time intelligence and reports	BMS users will access easily produced, real time data.
Enhanced internal controls and compliance	BMS enhanced controls and enables monitoring of compliance
Self-service maximized	
Access across the organization	

She further encouraged staff to participate in upcoming webinars on the same to acquaint themselves on the changes in the organization.

Ms. Spitta Ansah also presented on the procurement cycle and competitive bidding threshold and document requirements. On budget revisions for DI/DFC implementation, she advised programme staff to ensure budget revisions are made if the variation is or more than 10% of the approved budget; ensuring the same total of both approved and revised budgets.

In conclusion of the session the following were agreed actions:

All administrative processes for activity implementation should be completed within 15 days, and no activity should start without an approved budget and PO.

All DIs are to be retired with both financial and technical reports before the closure of POs.

Procured supplies are to be delivered to their designated destination and not stored in the warehouse, as is usually the case.

Staff were encouraged to familiarize themselves with the rules and regulations, including administrative procedures.

Further guidance will be provided by Ms Spitta Ansah on the BMS roll out once received. Field staff were encouraged to take care of WHO assets-(vehicles) and were reminded that WHO

vehicles should not replace County Health Team vehicles as they are meant to implement WHO related activities and not otherwise.

#### 4.2. WHO Field Presence

Staff were taken into reflection of whether the maintenance of field offices in WHO supported counties was necessary. Unanimously, it is agreed that the WHO field presence is necessary due to, but not limited to, the following reasons:

Enables close monitoring of health issues alongside the government—promoting accountability.

Results from the COVID-19 vaccination were a clear indication of the impact of WHO. Counties that were lagging behind in COVID-19 vaccination improved when taken over by WHO.

WHO provides technical and financial assistance that is supported by empirical data and facts in the respective counties, which contributes to the national picture.

Increases confidence when outbreaks occur, as there is trust that WHO will provide guidance.

Deliberating on how the field offices can be sustained, it was agreed that resource mobilization initiatives should highlight field presence support for both personnel and logistics, and showcasing our work is paramount in demonstrating the WCO's ability to produce results.

#### 4.3. Evaluation

Wrapping up the 3 day retreat an evaluation was made with a first set of questions which assessed knowledge levels of staff on general information of WHO as an organization, the second category of questions made reference to the overall feedback on the retreat by staff members. Overall, the retreat was perceived as great and successful, and had improved the team spirit—with some proposals on areas for improvement.

#### 5. Recommendations and Conclusion

This section outlines the key recommendations consolidated from the retreat and agreed action points to be implemented in 2023.

## 5.1. Recommendations and Action plan for 2023

By Letitia Nangwale

No	Recommendation	Action Point	Responsible person	Timeline
1	Improve engagement with the MOH and other key agencies and sectors of government on the preparation & implementation of the biennial plan 2024- 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organize a joint working session during the preparation of the biennial plan 2024/2025.</li> <li>Continue to engage with the MoH and other sectors in implementation of the biennial plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr. Charles Ocan/ Hambal Salihu/ SMT</li> <li>Cluster leads/ Professional staff</li> </ul>	September  Quarterly
2	Strengthen research including data and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize research, including data and innovation in the biennial plan 2024/ 2025.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cluster leads</li> </ul>	Continuous
3	Communicate our work to show visibility of WHO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clusters to submit at least 2 impact stories every quarter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cluster leads</li> </ul>	Quarterly
4	Sustain a culture of a safe work environment consistent with PREAH orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff to sign the PREASH-Code of conduct.</li> <li>All staff and non-staff to sign and receive “No Excuse Card” as per the PREASH requirements.</li> <li>Organize orientation on PREASH with all UN agencies and partners.</li> <li>Conduct background checks on SEAH for new recruitments.</li> <li>Conduct briefing on PREASH for newly recruited personnel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PREASH focal points/ All staff</li> <li>PREASH Focal points</li> <li>HR</li> <li>PREASH Focal points</li> </ul>	Continuous  Continuous  Continuous  Continuous

5	Achieving better results in 2023 •	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensify resource mobilization efforts to implement the biennial plan.</li> <li>• Include activity line on resource mobilization in ePMDS.</li> <li>• Scale up change initiative actions to increase productivity and achieve results.</li> <li>• Organize Cluster meetings to improve communication, planning and implementation of planned activities.</li> <li>• WR to hold meetings with all clusters to address the issues of conducive work environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cluster leads/Tichapiwa Tanyanyiwa</li> <li>• All professional staff</li> <li>• Change Agent focal point to get more guidance from AFRO.</li> <li>• Cluster leads/ Professional staff</li> <li>• WR and Cluster leads</li> </ul>	<p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous (up to December) March</p>
6	Improve administrative processes to ensure timely implementation of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure maximum compliance to all administrative, HR, financial and procurement procedures including “value for money” and “risk mitigation”.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All professional staff</li> </ul>	Continuous
7	Finalize and implement the Staff Association work plan for 2023.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize the work plan with feedback from the retreat.</li> <li>• Comply with payment of annual dues.</li> <li>• Monitor implementation of the annual work plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robert Kollie/ Executive Staff Association</li> <li>• All staff &amp; non-staff</li> <li>• Staff Association Executive</li> </ul>	<p>March</p> <p>Continuous</p> <p>Continuous</p>

## 5.2. Closing remarks

In his closing remarks, Dr. Clement thanked everyone for taking their time to participate actively in the retreat. He encouraged members to work harder as a team, looking ahead to deliver, as yesterday's achievements are in the past. He urged staff to sincerely ask themselves how they could contribute towards the wellbeing of Liberians. As the country approaches an election,



there's a need for a stronger WCO to deliver results. He encouraged better engagement and dialogue with the government and partners, where concrete actions that can be measured, implemented, and monitored appropriately should be generated. He also encouraged staff to make it a routine of taking stock of their own work to ensure personal accountability to the people they serve. He encouraged staff to patronise the webinars and undertake online courses in ilearn to keep abreast of developments in the organization and for their own professional development. He commended the cordial interactions between the field office and country office, which should continue, and advised field teams of his mission to visit field offices in the coming weeks. He also challenged staff to think through what the WCO will take on as its flagship goal in 2023; proposals should be shared in the next general staff meeting. He also extended his gratitude to Mr. John Paygar, who is serving notice and will be leaving the organization, and

wished him well in his new endeavors. Mr. Paygar has served the WCO as a driver since 2008 and will be remembered for his contribution to the organization.



# Annexes

## Retreat agenda

### Retreat Planning Committee

Akosua, Raphael, Dr Duworko, Robert

### Transportation/logistics

Raphael, Richard, Paygar

### Photography

Leticia, Vachel, Robert

### Chief Rapporteurs

Vachel, Leticia

### Sports and Entertainment

Nancy, Zainab, Quincy, Henry, Tamba Braima, Edna

### Health & welfare

Louis, Gertrude, Dr Jourdon, Perry

### Secretariat

Wammie, Priscilla, Olivia, Konor, Jacque

### WORLD HEALTH

### COUNTRY (

### 2023 WCO

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### THE FAR

THEME: "Contributing to  
well-being of all Liberians"



DAY 1: Wednesday 15 February 2023		
TIME	SESSION	Moderator: Hambal Rapporteur – Zainab
12:00-13:00	Arrival & check in	All
Lunch		
13:00-14:00	Welcome and Opening Remarks	Dr Clement
14:20-14:25	Admin announcements	Akosua
14:25-15:25	PRSEAH session	Dr Duworko/Akosua
15:25-16:45	Keynote address on the Theme	Dr Bernice Dahn
16:45-17:00	Group Photo	
17:00-17:45	Feedback on staff satisfaction survey (including question time)	Alfonso/Akosua
SPORTING TIME		
18:00-19:00	Dinner	
19:00		
DAY 2: Thursday 16 February 2023		
TIME	SESSION	Moderator: Gennevie Rapporteur – Emmanuel Harris.
9:00-11:00	Repositioning the WCO to achieve results for 2023	Team leads – Group Work
11:00-11:15	Coffee Break	
11:15-13:00	- Communicating our work - Group work	- TBD - Teams
Lunch		
13:00-14:00		Moderator – Barkon Rapporteur – Venn

14:00-15:00	Staff Association session – review of 2022 <u>workplan</u> , 2023 WP	Staff Association Executives
15:00-17:00	Entrepreneurship	Invited Guest
SPORTING TIME		
17:00-19:00	Dinner	
19:00		

DAY 3: Friday 17 February 2023		
TIME	SESSION	Moderator – Keah Rapporteur – Tina
9:00-9:10	Recap & review of Day 2	Vachel
9:10-10:10	Admin session	Akosua
10:10-11:10	Evaluation of the Retreat	Louis/Felicia/Alfonso
11:10-11:40	Review of recommendations and Action Plan for 2023	Leticia
12:30-13:00	Closing remarks	Dr Clement
13:00-14:00	Lunch	
15:00	Departure	



# In one word, describe this 2023 WCO retreat

