The preparations for the launching of the new Programme, called PENDA by some, during the 2014-2015 transition period were the key issues discussed at the last meeting of the Committee of Sponsoring Agencies (CSA). This took place on the occasion of the 144th session of the Committee held from 26 to 28 February 2014 at WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

The CSA brought together in Geneva its members representing the World Bank (WB), Sabine Institute, the Mectizan Donation Programme, the NGO Group for the elimination of onchocerciasis, WHO headquarters, WHO/AFRO and APOC and was joined, via teleconference, by representatives of the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Centre for Neglected Tropical Diseases of Liverpool School of Medicine (CNTD), and the Directorate of the Organic Group for Disease Control at the WHO Regional Office for Africa (DPC / WHO / AFRO).

Discussions were about establishing the Transition Task Force (TTF) agreed on, whose terms of reference would be revised to include the recommendations of the Global Alliance for the Elimination of LF (GAELF) in the objective of onchocerciasis and LF elimination and the support to other preventive chemotherapy neglected tropical diseases.

Regarding the governance structure of the new entity, the CSA advocated for accelerating activities and increasing teleconferences of the committee in charge of the preparation of the governance documents.

Moreover, after diverging interpretations, it was agreed that the 2014 plan of action and budget, presented by APOC and approved by JAF 19 in December 2013 in Brazzaville, could be implemented. Its mid-term review was scheduled for June 2014.

Another agenda item was the review of the structure of the Management of the Programme. To this end, the CSA urged the Management of APOC to consider the use of consultants in management, working with international companies, or the use of the services of two independent consultants, if need be.

Finally, the CSA requested that a resource mobilization plan be prepared and discussed for its activation.

The next CSA meeting will be held via teleconference on 2 May, 2014. It will be followed by another session in Ouagadougou from 25 -27 June, 2014.

Summary by T.B.
Since the end of 2013, the headquarters of the African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control (APOC) in Ouagadougou is being renovated. In response to the rhythm of the blows of hammers, the roar of jackhammers, the whistles of saws, the scratching of scrapers and trowels, and the rolling of wheelbarrows, the Programme staff and users have learnt to deal with it to avoid being disturbed by this noisy and dusty environment.

The repairs concern the main and secondary entrances, the offices of the management team, the main conference hall, the small meeting rooms, and also the backyard. But it is mostly the security apparatus that will benefit from better quality through the restoration of the barriers and security booths, the installation of security gates, video monitoring, and an automatic fire alarm system. The aesthetics in the offices is also improved with the installation of new secured glass windows and the replacement of furniture and window curtains.

According to APOC Administrative Officer, who keeps a close watch, the renovati could be completed by the end of March 2014. A couple of long days of hard work ahead for him, his team and the young workers, and it will soon be ready for the comfort, safety and well-being of all ♦ T.B.
The West African Health Organization (WAHO), one of APOC partners whose headquarters are located in the city of Bobo-Dioulasso in Burkina Faso, has been given a new management team. Installed on 3 February 2014, Dr Xavier Crespin, a national of Niger and Dr Laurent Aholofou Assogba, a national of Benin, are Director General and Deputy Director General respectively of the Organization. They succeed Drs Placido Cardoso and Jeanetta K. Johnson who led the Organization from April 2008 to January 2014.

Dr Xavier Crespin comes from UNICEF. He is a medical doctor with degrees in public health, nutrition, administration, health service and policy, and health funding. He was the Representative / Director of the American NGO, Helen Keller International (HKI), in Niamey from 2000 to 2005, then in Yaoundé from 2005 to 2010, where he collaborated extensively with APOC in the framework of Onchocerciasis control. As for Dr. Laurent Aholofou Assogba, also a medical doctor in public health, he was the Coordinator of the Onchocerciasis Programme in Benin, Director General of the Ministry of Health and the WAHO focal point in Benin from 2004 until his appointment.

Established in 1987, WAHO is the ECOWAS specialized health agency whose main objective is to provide the highest level of health care to the people of the sub-region based on the harmonization of the Member States’ policies, the pooling of resources and cooperation between them and with third countries. The fifteen ECOWAS countries are members of the WAHO. These countries are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. • Ida Savadogo

Dr Xavier CRESPIN (left) in tandem with Dr Laurent Aholofou ASSOGBA, now at the helm of WAHO

Family Spirit

ASOB: Announcement by the President

As part of the activities of the WHO staff Association in Burkina Faso and in reference to the Association’s Constitution and Rules of Procedures, its President, François Sobela, invites all members to a General Assembly (AG) on Thursday 27 March, 2014 in the meeting room of the WHO Country Office, Burkina Faso from **04:00 - 06:00 P.M.**
… The items on the agenda are as follows: Year 2013 Review; the GA’s advice regarding the mandate of the current Executive Board, proposals for the revision of ASOB’s Constitution and Rules of Procedures; mobilization and contribution to sports and other activities. The attendance of all would be highly appreciated.

**DIARY**

**Wedding of:**
Samir with Malika, son of Dr Adamou Yada, retired from WHO/AFRO, on 8/02/2014.

**Obituaries:**
- Memorial Requiem Mass for the brother of Ida Savadogo Yugbaré, deceased on 14/01/2013;
- Death of Célestin Tiendrébéogo, father of Berthe Ouédraogo, Secretary IST/WA on 1/02/2014;
- Death of the father of Dr Andrew Seidu Korkor, NTD, WHO Burkina Faso, on 7/02/2014;
- Death of Jean-Baptiste Nongonzanga Ouedraogo, father of Dr Arsène Ouedraogo, NPO/EDM, WHO Burkina Faso, on 21/01/2014;
- Funeral of Dr Blaise Bamouni, previously working at WHO Geneva, on 15 February 2014;
- Death of Antoinette Barry née Accrombessi, mother of our colleague, Rodrigue Barry, CAO, WHO Burkina Faso, on 1/03/2014 in Ouagadougou.

**Portrait:**

**Marie Rose Kaboré and Programme Meetings: Mastery of preparatory operations**

At the moment the season of the Programme meetings begins, Marie-Rose Kaboré née Ouedraogo has reached quite well before the cruising speed in the preparations. Behind piles of documents stored here and there like in a real dump, you will find a young woman, whose smile never fades away, moving continuously from handling the computer and the printer to filing hundreds of documents between two calls.

At the instigation of her supervisor, the Meetings Officer (PRO), and with the support of the administrative service, she would make available all the prerequisites that she knows on fingertips, several weeks before the beginning of the meetings.

In six years of practice, since her appointment to the current position in 2007, it is with real ease that she is active in the chain of formatting reports, preparing and sending invitation letters and flight tickets, providing accommodation arrangements and forwarding meeting documents to participants.

What she is doing now has nothing to do with human resource services where she worked as administrative assistant, at the beginning of her career, first in the first Programme (OCP) and at the beginning of the second Programme (APOC).

How does she manage to conciliate such hectic professional life and family life while taking care of three little girls, one would like to know? The answer is serenity that has always characterized M-R, a nickname given to her by COORD, both in a family of eight siblings and in faith-based schools. This gave rise to a call in her to join religious orders that was short-lived. However, she took from there this energy and this beaming smile that are typical of her. ♦T.B.

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