YEAR 2013 IS OVER; IT’S TIME NOW FOR TAKING STOCK

Like several other years before, year 2013 has been full of events and activities at the level of the World Health Organization (WHO), at the structural level as well as at the level of its entities among which is the African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control (APOC). Now, it’s December and it is customary for Managers to take stock at different levels.

Global level, Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General
«Some achievements in the public health sector»

According to the Director-General of the World Health Organization, Year 2013 was characterized by sad events but also by adequate interventions of the staff. In Syria for example, WHO contributed to an unprecedented scale of humanitarian aid where nine million people are in a war-stricken situation. In a particularly dangerous context with huge logistic problems due to intensive fights, the Organization supported large scale immunization campaigns also undertaken in neighboring countries to prevent 23 million children from poliomyelitis.

WHO also regularly provided worldwide warnings and information about human cases of coronavirus (MERS-CoV), avian flu caused by H5N1 virus, and about new H7N9 viruses. Warning was also issued regarding the steady progress of antimicrobial resistance, and about the worldwide concern relating to health and medical care.

Concerning another sector, «Member States approve strategies and global plans of actions that indicate the targets and objectives that are more and more ambitious for various priorities: non-communicable diseases and mental health or blindness and neglected tropical diseases », close to 2015.

For Dr Margaret Chan, satisfaction comes from progress in achieving the MDGs, particularly «the momentum in reducing the mother and child mortality thanks to simple innovations or to better use of available means.» Talking about AIDS, she optimisticly noted the more and more quasi-normal life expectancy of ten million people infected who benefitted from antiretroviral therapy due to efforts supported by WHO. In addition, the number of death cases due to malaria and tuberculosis has been considerably reduced.

Recognizing the close collaboration between WHO and the World Bank for the economic accessibility to the universal health insurance coverage in the countries, she highlighted efforts made in accessing essential medicines, pre-selection, appropriate technologies, patients’ safety and the reinforcement of regulation authorities.

Finally, the Director-General of WHO wished Happy New Year 2014 to the entire staff.

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In his year-end message, the Regional Director of the WHO Office for Africa took stock of positive achievements at the regional level «we should all be proud of». As an example, he referred to «The launching of the regional Strategic Information System (rSIS) with retrospective data and projections on communicable and non-communicable diseases, sensibilization and actions to face the risks of non-communicable diseases such as the harmful use of alcohol, and tobacco addiction, the contribution provided to the WHO reform and the revision of the financing strategies of health in order to achieve the universal health insurance coverage».

Regarding the seventy-third session of the Regional Committee that was attended by the Ministers of Health of the WHO member States in the African Region from 2nd to 6th September 2013 in Brazzaville, Congo, Dr Luis Gomes Sambo undertook the review of the resolutions taken relating to public health and regarding the road map in order to increase human resources in the health sector, improve the maternal health so that it should play an increased role in the development of Africa, the adoption of the WHO new guidelines for the treatment and prevention of HIV infection, the regional strategy for neglected tropical diseases, e-health, traditional medicine and the health of the elderly people.

Then, he declared that he was sure that in 2014, «we will start the new year with a renewed feeling of focus, determination, and passion to fulfill the WHO noble mission». In addition, he expressed his gratitude to the WHO Representatives and to the staff members of the WHO Representations in South Africa, Algeria, Angola, Benin, Cape Verde, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Gabon, Nigeria, Sao Tome-and-Principe, Senegal, and South Sudan for the hospitality and assistance granted to him during his missions to these countries.

Finally, on behalf of all the WHO AFRO staff, he expressed his best wishes to the Director-General, to the other five Regional Directors, and to all the staff of the World Health Organization.

Dear Colleagues,

«Here we are at the end of 2013! A year full of challenges and rich in achievements! I would first like to thank you all for your commitment, hard work, and professionalism. I commend you for the atmosphere in which the job has often been done, in a spirit of complementarity that we value so much here.

This year coincides with the end of the 2012-2013 biennium and the WHO reform process enables us, once again, to demonstrate the value of our team and its ability to take up the challenges and achieve the expected outcomes at managerial and programmatic levels. We have consolidated our capacities to use the GSM and have successfully led the planning process for the 2014-2015 biennium. As far as the programmatic aspect is concerned, I cannot ignore some of the achievements that will have a significant impact on health development in Burkina Faso and on the level of the population health. These achievements are: the development of three-year plans for human resources development, the starting of the funding strategy of health in line with the universal health insurance coverage, the introduction of two new vaccines in the routine EPI, and the adoption of the new recommendations on the HIV/AIDS PEC.

Dear Colleagues, this is a great opportunity for me to congratulate you for all the challenges taken up and for the outcome achieved.

I commend the WHO West Africa Inter-country Support Team for the wonderful job and the available and continued support, and thank them sincerely and particularly for being always available and for the quality of the support provided to the Country Office in Burkina Faso. Without your support and availability, we certainly would not have achieved all our objectives and the quality of our support would not have reached our ambitions. I cannot ignore the hard work undertaken by our colleagues from the APOC Programme to eliminate onchocerciasis (and other neglected tropical diseases) in our continent, oftentimes in very difficult circumstances. I commend them for their victories and achievements and urge them to continue with the same ardor and commitment for Africa free from NTDs and particularly from Onchocerciasis. Our colleagues from the MDSC have experienced a difficult year but this did not prevent them from continuing to do the best they can so that the activities and commitments should be respected. I commend them for that and urge them to persevere.

For all these reasons, I’m pleased to thank you all, on behalf of the Director-General, for your contribution so that the name and reputation of WHO in Burkina should continue to have a significant place in the universe of health development in this country. WHO relies on each of us to continue to play its role and contribute a little more each day for a better level of health for the populations.

I’d like to have a special thought for all those who experienced difficulties in 2013, be it at the professional or personal level and wish them much courage to resume normal life with bravery.

Finally, I hope this year-end will be an opportunity for each of us to take stock at personal level, leading to taking good resolutions that will benefit us in all aspects in 2014 and beyond. I would then like to wish you and your families happy end-of-year celebrations, and a new year full of health, happiness and personal and professional achievements! May we contribute to the adequate implementation of the WHO reform to consolidate our leadership role in the field of health development in this country and in the world !

Happy New Year to you all! »
During the feedback to the staff on the conclusions of the Joint Action Forum (JAF) and the Committee of the Sponsoring Agencies' (CSA) meetings held from 11th -14th December 2013 in Brazzaville, Congo, the Director of the African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control (APOC) had encouraging words for the staff.

After a review of the decisions made by the two statutory bodies of the Programme, Dr Jean-Baptiste Roungou ended with an encouraging address to his colleagues. This address is quoted below.

« Six months ago, I came here as the head of the Programme. I can assure you that I am globally pleased with the work of the entire staff. Much was to be done, the work pace was intensive and the results are satisfactory. I would like to congratulate all of you for that. A colossal undertaking is to be achieved. We have been assigned numerous tasks by JAF and CSA with limited resources without reducing the objectives. This is a big challenge that should not frighten us. With quality team work while striving for excellence, we will make it.

As far the work methods are concerned, I would like to reiterate my requirement for good results that are based on hard work and quality work and not on the number of hours spent in the office, and even less on hours spent beyond office hours. I will encourage the most devoted and deserving staff.

Merry Christmas to all! Happy New Year 2014! Wishing you good health, Peace in your hearts, in your families, at the work place, and in member countries. May you succeed in all your undertaking. May you all live long! »

A year is ending while another year is going to begin with daily work not always easy to perform, with moments of joy and sorrow and health hazards. As it is customary worldwide at Christmas and New Year, hereafter are the many good wishes for our colleagues, families, and friends.

An overview of the wishes from APOC offices

Ahmedou Sidi Ely : « As we begin New Year 2014, I wish Mauritania , my country, prosperity and stability, success to my friend, President Mohamed Abdelaziz, happiness to all my colleagues at APOC, and professional success to the Management of APOC »

Nebié Boukari : « My best wishes of health and happiness to all. Success to APOC and to those who fight night and day to achieve their own objectives. Happy New Year 2014!»
Ilboudo Samé Etienne: «My best wishes to all APOC staff and to their families. May 2014 be much more fruitful than 2013 during which we all experienced a lot of sorrows due to the people who departed from us. Happy New Year!»

Ouedraogo Karim: «I’m pleased to wish you Happy New Year 2014. May the New Year bring you health, longevity, peace, success, and faith!»

Ouedraogo Edith: «I wish a holy and happy New Year 2014 to the entire WHO family. May God, in his boundless goodness, remedy the international financial crisis for a more fraternal world!»

Kalsany Emma: «For the coming New Year, May God, our Lord grant each one of us health, longevity, peace, and success in our undertaking. May He bless APOC!»

Kaboré Yamba: «My best wishes of health and peace to all! May APOC be given a lot of opportunities to get much more funding!»

Kima Raogo Augustin: «Wishing you all and those you dearly love health, peace, and prosperity!»

Mossi Thérèse: «My wish is that the APOC Newsletter be distributed to all participating countries and to the partners so that they get much more exposed to the outcomes achieved by the Programme»

Bationon Sylvain: «All my best wishes of success and longevity to APOC Programme and to the new entity!»

Koanda Salfo Ouahi: «Happy New Year 2014 to all my colleagues at APOC. May God, the Merciful, assist us all along the New Year and Merry Christmas to all!»

Bonkoungou Hamado: «Happy New Year 2014 to all. May it be a year in which all APOC and MDSC staff are provided with work. May the APOC Director review the problem of the MDSC staff. May you live long!»

Bakonné Lallé: «I wish longevity and success to the entire staff and to the Programme. For more remarkable success to come, let’s work together in a spirit of team and a sense of rigor.»

Issaka Niandou Yacouba: «I have no better wishes than health, success, prosperity and much love all along the New Year. Together with my family, we wish all the best to the stakeholders mobilized for the control of the neglected tropical diseases and to their loved ones. May the New Year see our actions become prosperous and enable us to take up the challenges we are facing!»

Compaoré N’Deye Rokhaya Sy: «I wish health, prosperity, success, much love and peace to the Compaoré family. Best wishes to WHO/APOC staff and to their families!»

Fao Dieudonné: «At the beginning of the New Year, I’d like to wish health, peace, joy, and happiness to all of you, to your families and to your relatives. I wish Lord, our Almighty God, may grant you his grace and mercy for personal and professional success. May this New Year be one of achievements for APOC through hard work, devotion, and complementarity. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2014 to you all!»

Ouedraogo Estelle: «I wish prosperity and courage to APOC Newsletter team so that they take up the challenges of 2014!»

Zougmaré Marie: «Happy and Holy Year 2014 to all the colleagues and their families! May we spend the last days of the year full of Peace in our hearts and minds. May 2014 be a promise for achieving the Programme objectives, full understanding and harmony between us for individual and collective development!»

Yaovi M. Aholou: «Best wishes to all the colleagues and to the Programme managers. May the Peace and the Love of God be shared among us all along Year 2014!»

Kondombo Bewendin Amado: «Best wishes to all APOC and WHO staff, to APOC Director and his family, to the heads of services and their families, and to all GS staff and their families. I mostly wish you all health, success and longevity. Happy New Year!»

Ilboudo Antoinette: «Merry Christmas to APOC family. May 2014 be a year of peace, health, and success at all levels!»

Laurent Toé: «At the end of year 2013, I wish you all know that it has been a real pleasure working together, sharing views and experiences, while keeping in mind that we did all that for the success of onchocerciasis control. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2014 to APOC Management, to all staff members and to their families!»

François Sobela: «Merry Christmas to you all, and Best wishes for health, happiness and prosperity in 2014 with Season Greetings!»

Tekle Afework: «Health, peace, bright future and happiness for everyone in this Holiday season and always! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!»

Tendainashe Siwombe: «I wish each one of you, an enjoyable 2014 which should then turn out to be the best of years we have ever walked through»