The World Health Organization Regional Director for the African Region (WHO/AFRO), Dr Mathshidiso. R. Moeti, who just started her mandate in February 2015 met with Bukina Faso’s authorities and the WHO staff on 6 March 2015.

As one of her first mission after her election, Dr Mathshidiso R. Moeti undertook a courtesy visit from 5 to 6 March 2015 to congratulate Burkina Faso’s authorities for the role «they have played in hosting OCP (Onchocerciasis Control Programme) and APOC (African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control) over several decades and in providing a conducive environment that has facilitated the work and enabled the results achieved».

Despite the limited time of this mission, Dr Moeti met with the staff members of APOC. She acknowledged the hard work by the staff and the excellent achievements made by the Programme.

Dr Jean Baptiste Roungou, APOC Director welcomed Dr Moeti and expressed his gratitude to her for taking her time in spite of her busy agenda, to come to Ouagadougou and to APOC. For him, this is an indication of the importance the Regional Director attached to the control of Neglected Tropical Diseases in general and of onchocerciasis in particular.

Dr François Sobela, President of the WHO staff Association in Burkina Faso (ASOB) seized this opportunity to congratulate Dr Moeti and wish her success in her new function. The visit was also an opportunity for the staff to request for more information on the forthcoming closure of APOC and the launching of the new entity.

Dr Moeti stated that she «will make sure that the closure (of APOC) is done properly and fairly ». She confirmed that as far as the staff is concerned, a mission from Brazzaville will come soon to Ouagadougou to brief the staff on the separation process. Regarding the development of the new entity, consultations are ongoing. WHO intends to call a joint meeting of the stakeholders to take forward the discussions on the new entity.

The visit was also the occasion for APOC to have the statue for onchocerciasis control unveiled by Dr Moeti. After a visit of some offices of APOC, the staff association offered her refreshment in the brand new cafeteria of APOC.