

WEST AFRICAN HEALTH SECTOR UNIONS NETWORK (WAHSUN)

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COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE 25TH PLENARY SESSION OF THE WEST AFRICAN HEALTH SECTOR UNIONS NETWORK

The 25th Plenary Session of the West African Health Sector Unions Network (WAHSUN) has called on governments within the sub-region to take immediate action to finance quality healthcare and protect healthcare workers. The Abuja meeting brought together affiliated unions from Ghana and Nigeria with participants from Burkina Faso, Liberia, Niger, Senegal and Togo joining virtually from 24th to 25th April 2026. Representatives of Public Services International (PSI), from its headquarters in Geneva and the Africa and Arab Countries regional office attended alongside labour centres, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders.

The Plenary took place within the context of ongoing pressures on health systems across West Africa: chronic underfunding, staff shortages, migration and the growing impact of privatization and climate-related health risks. These factors continue to slow progress towards universal health coverage and the recognition of health as a basic right.

Objective

To assess health system challenges in West Africa and agree on joint trade union actions to protect workers and strengthen public healthcare towards universal health coverage.

Key Observations:

- Many countries do not meet the Abuja target of allocating 15% of national budgets to health, resulting in poorly resourced health systems.
- Primary healthcare is weak, with poor accountability and governance issues.
- Health workers face high migration rates, poor working conditions, and safety concerns.
- Privatisation of health services is increasing alongside economic pressures affecting workers' livelihoods.
- Climate change is adding pressure on health systems and workers.
- Rising living costs are reducing workers' incomes and worsening conditions across the sector.

Recommendations: Governments within ECOWAS

- Governments must increase public investment in health in line with the Abuja Declaration and prioritise primary healthcare, workforce expansion, and infrastructure.
- Governments must improve wages and working conditions to retain and recruit health workers.

Building Alliances and Promoting International Working Class Solidarity

- Governments should pay all outstanding allowances, and social protection systems should be strengthened.
- Governments must implement Collective Agreements fully; failure to do so will prompt further union action.
- Governments should regularise the employment of all casual and contract healthcare workers in public healthcare.

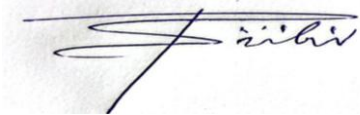
WASHUN Regional Position

- WAHSUN affirms the role of trade unions in defending public health systems, protecting workers, and shaping policy.
- WAHSUN rejects policies that weaken public health systems through privatisation and will continue to defend public services. WAHSUN will press for health systems that respond to the effects of climate change.
- WAHSUN will continue to advocate for better pay and working conditions, implement collective agreements, and regularise casual workers.
- WAHSUN will continue to support its affiliates to engage governments through social dialogue on fair wages and measures to protect workers' living standards.

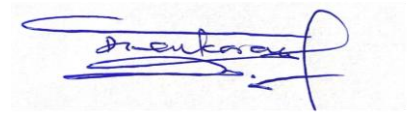
Conclusion

Strong public health systems are essential, and health workers must be protected and supported. WAHSUN will continue to engage governments and act where needed to ensure these positions are reflected in policy and practice.

Signed



DR. KABIRU ADO SANI MINJIBIR
WAHSUN CHAIRPERSON



DR. DAVID TENKORANG – TWUM
WAHSUN SECRETARY

End.:

1. *Medical and Health Workers' Union of Nigeria (MHWUN),*
2. *Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association (GRNMA),*
3. *Health Services Workers Union (HSWU) Ghana TUC*
4. *National Health Workers Union of Liberia*
5. *Syndicat National des Sages femmes et maïeuticiennes du Burkina Faso*
6. *Syndicat National des praticiens hospitaliers du Togo*
7. *Syndicat unique de la santé et de l'action sociale du Niger*
8. *Syndicat National des Travailleurs de la Santé (TU16796)*
9. *Labour centres, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders in Nigeria*
10. *PSI Regional office, Africa and Arab Countries*