WEST AFRICAN HEALTH SECTOR UNIONS NETWORK (WAHSUN)

WEBINAR ON ‘THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: WHERE ARE WE AT AS A SUB- REGION,

CONCEPT NOTE

22ND SEPTEMBER, 2022
**BACKGROUND**

The West African Health Sector Unions Network (WASHUN) brings together health sector unions in the West African Sub-region who are affiliated to the Public Services International (PSI). The spread of the Covid-19 virus across borders was declared a pandemic on 11th March, 2020 by the World Health Assembly. Since then, nations across West Africa have had their share of the toll of the pandemic on the already fragile health systems and their economies.

WAHSUN and its constituents have been at the frontlines in the fight against the Coronavirus and amidst the challenges of inadequate supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), medications, hand sanitizers and other logistics. Low testing capacity of West African nations and the lack of capacity to produce the Covid-19 vaccines have put most West African nations at the mercy of high income countries for donations of Covid-19 vaccines and through the COVAX facility to vaccinate citizens. Some West African countries like Ghana have plans to manufacture their own vaccines but experts have indicated that it will require a strong regulatory system to achieve it.

The development of the International Instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response aimed at protecting present and future generations from the devastating effects of a pandemic while ensuring equity, human rights and solidarity with all people and countries. In the view of WAHSUN, the Instrument does not recognize the rights of health workers in terms of medical insurance and other welfare needs.

Two and half years on, health professionals in the sub-regional want to understand where we are as a sub-region and what there is to be done especially in the preparation for future pandemics.

It is for these reasons that WAHSUN leadership finds it necessary to hold this webinar to reach out to health sector unions and their members as well as other stakeholders within the West African region to discuss the issue of where we are in terms of our response against the Covid-19 pandemic as a sub-region and also formulate a positive path for the future.
THE PROBLEM

Leaders of health sector trade unions are usually engulfed in typical trade union business of their unions vigorously addressing the welfare needs of their members and sometimes lose sight of the impact of the global health agreements and decisions which come back to all nations to affect health systems. The Covid-19 pandemic has gone down in the sub-region and life is almost back to the pre-covid conditions. Health sector unions need to understand the status of the pandemic response of their nations and situate it in the sub regional picture and be able to deduce the lessons for the future which ultimately prioritizes the rights of the health workers.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF WEBINAR

The overall goal of the webinar is to equip health sector union leaders and members with current information on the Covid-19 pandemic response in the sub-regional and provide update on the WHO International Instrument on global pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To equip health sector Trade Union leaders with the requisite knowledge to educate members and the general public on covid-19 vaccines roll out in West Africa.

2. To determine the state of the Working Draft of the WHO Convention or International Instrument on Pandemic prevention, preparedness and response and the role of health sector trade unions.
 DETAILS OF THE WEBINAR

DATE FOR WEBINAR:  22nd September, 2022
TIME:  12:00 GMT

MAIN THEME:
The main theme of the Webinar is “The Covid-19 Pandemic: Where are we at as a sub-region”.
SPEAKER: A representative from WHO Afro Regional office

SUBTHEME & SPEAKER:
The Pandemic Treaty: The Role of Health Sector Unions
SPEAKER: Comrade Baba Aye, PSI

MODE OF WEBINAR: Virtual via Zoom

EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS: Leaders of all affiliate unions and their members

Contact Persons: WAHSUN Chairperson, Mrs. Perpetual Ofori-Ampofo & WAHSUN General Secretary, Mr. Ayegba Ojonugwa

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