



Banjul, The Gambia – February 6-7, 2025

PRESS RELEASE

The Director-General of WAHO, Dr. Melchior Athanase Joël Codjovi AÏSSI, participates in the 10th anniversary of AREF in Banjul.



Banjul, The Gambia – February 6-7, 2025 – Dr. Melchior Athanase Joël Codjovi AÏSSI, Director-General of the West African Health Organization (WAHO), participated in the 10th anniversary celebration of the Africa Research Excellence Fund (AREF) in Banjul, The Gambia. He was accompanied by Professor Issiaka Sombie, Ms. Hadi Janneh, and Ms. Bibiche Nadège Hounkpé.

Founded in 2015 by Professor Tumani Corrah, AREF aims to strengthen health research in Africa by building a community of African researchers capable of delivering world-class scientific work. Since its inception, WAHO has been an active supporter of AREF, funding the participation of young researchers from the ECOWAS region and signing a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen this collaboration.



WEST AFRICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION OUEST AFRICAINE DE LA SANTE
ORGANIZAÇÃO OESTE AFRICANA DA SAÚDE

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The February 6 program was dedicated to a scientific symposium, featuring several presentations on the history and impact of African health researcher development, the need for African-led research, and the challenges of research funding.

During his address, Dr. Melchior Athanase Joël Codjovi AÏSSI **presented WAHO's mission and its 2024-2027 Strategy, which focuses on health services, disease surveillance, research, governance, and institutional strengthening. He also highlighted WAHO's efforts in enhancing national health research systems through improved governance, funding, scientific production, and the use of research evidence to inform health policies.**

On February 7, an award ceremony showcased testimonies from beneficiaries of AREF fellowships and training programs. These accounts highlighted the program's positive impact on fundraising, research team structuring, and the expansion of training programs into multiple languages, including French and soon Portuguese.

On the sidelines of the event, Dr. Melchior Athanase Joël Codjovi AÏSSI held strategic meetings with the AREF team to explore further collaboration opportunities, including an online meeting scheduled for the week of February 17, 2025. He also met with the leadership of colleges of physicians and dental surgeons, who sought WAHO's support in improving the quality of medical and dental training.

Dr. Melchior Athanase Joël Codjovi AÏSSI committed to supporting this process through a needs assessment, action planning, and potential assistance for the colleges' initiatives.

Through these engagements, Dr. Melchior Athanase Joël Codjovi AÏSSI reaffirmed WAHO's commitment to advancing health research and strengthening capacity-building in West Africa.

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