



**41<sup>ST</sup> AHSAG Annual Conference and Continuing Professional Education Programme,**  
**Eastern Premier Hotel, Koforidua**  
**November 29 – December 2, 2017**

**Conference Communiqué**

**Preamble**

The Association of Health Service Administrators, Ghana (AHSAG) at the end of its 41st Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in Koforidua, Eastern Region from 29th November – 2nd December, 2017, under the theme “Mobilizing for the Attainment of the Health-related Sustainable Development Goals: The Role of the Health Service Administrator” and having extensively deliberated on topical issues relating to the theme, adopted the following resolutions:

**Sustainable Development Goals**

AHSAG wishes to congratulate the Government of Ghana for the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2016 as replacement for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that came to a close in 2015. The 17–point SDGs seek to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure peace and prosperity for the global community. We are happy to note that Ghana has committed itself to the realization of the SDGs.

We, however, urge the political leadership to mobilize Ghanaians through awareness creation at all levels to drive the implementation of activities for the attainment of the SDGs by the 2030 dateline. The lessons learnt from the implementation of the MDGs should spur us on in this regard.

We further call for the active involvement, participation and collaboration of governmental institutions, Civil Society Organizations, Private Sector Organizations, Regional and

International Organizations, and Development Partners in the formulation and implementation of national policies and programmes aimed at achieving the SDGs.

### **Resource Mobilization for the Attainment of SDGs**

AHSAG notes that the attainment of the SDGs will largely depend on the availability of requisite human, material and fiscal resources. We, therefore, urge the Government to actively engage Civil Society Organizations, Development Partners and other key stakeholders to mobilize the requisite resources needed for the attainment of the SDGs.

### **Strengthening the National Health System**

#### **a. New Health Bill**

AHSAG re-affirms its full support to the health sector decentralization process which we believe would strengthen service delivery to meet the health needs of the local people. We therefore urge Government to complete the draft health bill taking into consideration relevant inputs of stakeholders so that the final output will be acceptable to all health professional groups. We wish to also caution against parochial interests that would lend undue advantage to certain professional groups. This will create disaffection among other professional groups who would feel marginalized and thus impede team efforts required for the attainment of the SDGs.

#### **b. ICT Infrastructure**

The relevance of data and information for the attainment of the health sector goals and objectives cannot be over-emphasized. AHSAG notes, however, that the IT infrastructure for data and information management in the health sector is weak. In fact, the ICT System in the health sector is made largely of numerous stand-alone and unsynchronized programmes and information systems.

AHASG therefore urges the Ministry of Health to expedite the implementation of the health component of the National Digital Agenda to significantly transform the application of ICT in the health service delivery. The Ghana Health Service and other service delivery agencies of the Ministry of Health should be adequately resourced through massive investment in relevant ICT infrastructure and recruitment of IT professions to derive the needed benefits. This, when

accomplished, will guarantee accurate, comprehensive, relevant, accessible and timely availability of information for decision making in matters relating to the health and well-being of the people in Ghana.

**c. Capping of Internally Generated Funds of Health Facilities**

AHSAG appreciates Government's efforts aimed at increasing domestic revenue for national development. The Association is, however, concerned about the capping of retained Internally Generated Funds (IGFs) of public health facilities. It should be noted that public health facilities manage their IGFs as revolving fund for the provision of medicines and non-medical consumables which are critical inputs for quality health service delivery. The implementation of the Capping Policy would eventually deplete the revolving funds and result in stock-out of essential health commodities in public health facilities. We therefore call on Government to exempt public health facilities from the Policy and allow the facilities to utilize their full IGFs to meet the rising cost of healthcare. Improved accountability through effective auditing should be demanded from management of public health facilities to ensure value for money in the utilization of the IGFs.

**d. Completion of Health Infrastructure Projects**

The Association has observed with appreciation the continuation of some major hospital and polyclinic construction projects by Government and that these were progressing towards completion.

We are however concerned about the sudden stoppage of works on other hospital projects in the regions, particularly, the Upper East Regional Hospital Rehabilitation Project and the other district hospital projects in selected districts. AHSAG therefore calls on Government to, as a matter of priority, reactivate work on all these projects without further delay since the completion of these facilities will boost Ghana's capacity towards the attainment of the SDGs.

**Mental Health Services**

AHSAG further notes that Mental Health is one of the key components of the health indicators

under the SDGs. Despite the passing of the Mental Health Act, 2012 (Act 846) to regulate the mental health services, the accompanying Legislative Instrument (LI) to effectively operationalize the Act is not in place. This has seriously affected the provision of mental health services in Ghana resulting in the perennial challenge of over-crowding in the psychiatric hospitals, irregular availability of psychotropic drugs for psychiatric patients, inadequate food and logistics supplies for psychiatric hospitals and the failure to take mental health cases off our streets.

The Association therefore calls on Government to ensure the prompt passage of the LI to Act 846 and to effectively integrate mental health services into the health delivery system at all levels. We further recommend to Government to establish at least one Psychiatric Hospital in the Northern Sector of the country to improve access to mental health services.

### **Strengthening Governance in the GHS**

- a. AHSAG notes that an effective governance system is a prerequisite for building strong institutions to meet the hopes and aspirations of Ghanaians. It is in this regard that we note with serious concern the deliberate disregard by some heads of facilities for directives from the national leadership of the GHS that are aimed at ensuring transparency and accountability in the facilities. AHSAG therefore urges the leadership of GHS to hold any head of facility who fails to adhere to directives accountable without fear or favour.
- b. AHSAG deplors recent attempts by some persons in positions of trust in the health sector to sideline Health Service Administrators who are professionally trained to manage health facilities in the recruitment of health workers. It is unethical to recruit large numbers of graduates without the needed skills and competencies required to manage the health services while ignoring those professionally trained for the health sector. We therefore call on the MoH and the GHS to urgently halt this practice and ensure that professionals trained for the sector are duly recruited to reduce the huge backlog of trained Health Service Administrators currently unemployed whilst their services are needed in newly constructed health facilities as well as those upgraded to provide improved health care to Ghanaians.

### **Re-launching of the Preventive Maintenance Programme**

The provision of new health facilities is important for the development of the country. Equally important is the maintenance of these facilities for their continuous functionality and longevity. AHSAG has observed that the preventive maintenance programme that hitherto existed in the health sector has collapsed due to low commitment and investment. This development has led to poor maintenance culture and incoherent implementation of maintenance programmes in the health sector.

AHSAG therefore calls on the leadership of MoH and the GHS to consider the re-introduction of the preventive maintenance programme in the health sector and issue the necessary directives that will ensure the availability of the needed resources (human, logistical, and financial) to those charged with the responsibility of maintenance.

Finally, AHSAG entreats the GHS to adopt a distinctive colour scheme for its health facilities nation-wide. Such a colour scheme will give facilities a unique identity and promote access.

*Signed:*

*Albert Asiedu-Ofei*

*AHSAG President*

*Signed:*

*Iddrisu A. Tanko*

*General Secretary*