

DIRECTOR GENERAL NAFDAC'S RESPONSE TO ACPN PROPOSAL

The Director General of NAFDAC, Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, received the delegates from ACPN National led by the Chairman ACPN Nat. Dr Albert K Alkali, on the 26th January 2018. She was accompanied by a few of her senior management team. Each member of the ACPN delegate introduced themselves then the NAFDAC management team responded by introducing themselves. Afterwards the chairman ACPN went straight to the reason for the visit.

The Chairman thanked the DG for receiving the delegates and offered the hands of ACPN in fellowship. He however noted that for a collaborative relationship to be established ACPN had some issues they needed to be addressed (see attached).

After his speech the DG gave a brief response to some of the matters of concern. Prof Adeyeye spoke of her admiration of pharmacists in Nigeria. She noted that Nigerian community pharmacists were ahead of their US counterparts in terms of pharmaceutical care, even if this was by default. However, she noted that this provision of pharmaceutical care came with the risk of fraud if unmonitored. She observed that there were pharmacies that provided excellent and quality services and there were some that compromised their quality thereby spoiling the images of all pharmacies nationwide.

1. On the issue of using policemen and media during routine inspections of duly registered pharmaceutical premises, the DG suggested that the process had to be made more sophisticated. She suggested the first visit consist of a chat with the pharmacist and that visit should be scheduled. She noted that this was under the jurisdiction of the pharmacovigilance surveillance team and that their over enthusiasm might have been due to the increased rise of drug abuse cases in the country. She gave an example of what is happening in the north particularly Kano, noting that the increased sales of cough preparations containing codeine was being perpetuated by pharmacists in Kano. "Nevertheless", Prof Adeyeye said, "the process can be made more sophisticated". She promised that NAFDAC would do be better in their behavior during regulatory activities. She promised there would be in house talks to address the issue.
2. On the issue of orphan drugs, the DG noted that there were still knowledge gaps with regards to orphan drugs and that NAFDAC had already taken steps to deal with this matter. A stakeholders meeting has been scheduled for May and they were expecting a number of presentations on the issue. In the meantime, she said, NAFDAC would meet to discuss best practice before the May meeting.

Prof. Adeyeye again made a comparison between Nigerian trained pharmacists and US trained pharmacists. She commended the pharmacy curriculum in Nigeria for still retaining the teachings of Pharmaceutical Chemistry and Pharmacognosy saying that in the US the shift had been made to more of clinical pharmacy and asked how one could approve a drug if they didn't know the chemistry of the drug. In her opinion pharmacy should not be segmented.

Prof Adeyeye noted that orphan drugs in terms of class were not really understood and this had an effect on the guideline. She was hopeful that the issue would be approached differently. She suggested unorthodox methods may be required on rare occasions of need of an orphan drug. She said procedures would be developed to favour both parties. She said a communication line should be developed and opened between community pharmacists and NAFDAC especially the

pharmacovigilance team. In order to promote that, the NAFDAC website was being rebuilt to improve services.

On service drugs the DG stated that NAFDAC had a problem with wannabe distributors who were selling substandard drugs but reiterated that the issue would be looked at internally and addressed.

On sampling the DG agreed that NAFDAC had to be circumspect in their process, "we cannot sample 2 cartons of an item if there were only 2 cartons". She informed the delegates that talks were ongoing with the laboratories who have been asked to be more creative. Her aim is to ensure that good lab practices is the norm and people who did not know how to conduct analysis were not put to such tasks.

On time taken to process and issue permit, the DG assured the delegates that the process would improve; her intention is to reduce the time for processing. She said that there was a backlog of permits being handled and asked for forbearance; she estimated this would take up to 6 months. The DG said she was carrying out a reshuffle, trying to fit round pegs into round holes. Her aim is to ensure that the competency needed for each directorate is provided. NAFDAC employees have been directed to improve the image of the agency and to ensure the lives and health of Nigerians is safeguarded.

On the disposal of expired drugs, the Deputy Director stated there were guidelines for the collection of expired drugs. The DG added that there will be internal discussions about designing a process where notifications about collections would be sent to pharmacies beforehand so that pharmacies would have the expired drugs ready for collection.

On bar-coding the DG assured the delegates that Registration and Regulatory directorate was working on the issue.

Prof. Adeyeye thanked the ACPN delegates for their visit and noted that without problems life would be boring but that NAFDAC was committed to tackling them all.

The ACPN delegates presented the DG NAFDAC with souvenirs from the association which included the 2018 Calendars as well as the DIC Journal "Drug Bulletin" and health Magazine "You & Your Pharmacist".

Reported by ACPN Drug Information Centre.