

**President's Malaria Initiative Partners Meeting
Ghana
December 2, 2008**

Trip Report

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About DQI

The Drug Quality and Information (DQI) Program, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (cooperative agreement HRN-A-00-00-00017-00) and implemented by the United States Pharmacopeia (USP), provides technical leadership to more than 30 developing countries to strengthen their drug quality assurance programs, ensure the quality of medicines and promote public health. DQI helps build local, national and regional capacity to improve the standards of drug manufacturing and distribution, reduce the impact of infectious diseases, mitigate the effects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and advance the appropriate use of medicines. This document does not necessarily represent the views or opinions of USAID. It may be reproduced if credit is given to DQI and USP.

Abstract

The Drug Quality and Information (DQI) Program participated in a meeting of the Ghana President's Malarial Partner's that was held in Accra, Ghana on December 02, 2008. The meeting was scheduled for the partners to provide an update on their activities and present their workplans for the FY 2009. DQI made a presentation that outlined a planning workshop that was previously organized to establish an antimalarial medicines quality control program in Ghana and also an assessment of the country's QA/QC capacity. Plans developed by DQI for the country based on these assessments were also presented.

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Key Words

Ghana, President's Malaria Initiative, PMI, antimalarials, drug quality assurance, drug quality control, drug quality monitoring, Minilabs[®]

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The author wishes also to express sincere thanks to all the other partners for sharing their plans and accomplishments, and also for the frank and open discussions during the meeting.

Special thanks to Reverend Jonathan Martey, Acting CEO, Food and Drug Board (FDB) for meeting with and briefing the author on the FDB's plans regarding a new building to house the National Quality Control Lab (NQCL) and also for arranging for a tour of the NQCL premises.

Special thanks to Mr. Anthony Boni and Ms. Veerle Coignez at USAID/Washington for their support.

We are also grateful to the USP DQI staff who reviewed and edited this report and assisted with the planning of this trip.

ACRONYMS

DQI	Drug Quality and Information Program
FDB	Food and Drug Board
GMP	Good Manufacturing Practices
NMCP	National Malaria Control Program
NQCL	National Quality Control Laboratory
PMI	President's Malarial Initiative
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USP	United States Pharmacopeia
WHO	World Health Organization

Background

USP DQI has supported the Food and Drug Board (FDB) of Ghana since FY04. USP DQI equipped and trained quality control (QC) laboratory staff, trained FDB staff on drug registration, and installed SIAMED for the department of drug evaluation. Drug quality assurance (QA) is still a major issue in Ghana due to various factors. The QC lab staff are well trained; however, the lab facilities are old and do not offer a good work environment. Pharmacovigilance activities have been delayed.

USP DQI was selected by USAID to provide technical assistance to FDB to strengthen their QA/QC systems. The objective of this visit was to meet with other PMI partners to update them and the Ghanaian National Malarial Control Program (NMCP) about DQI plans and accomplishments.

Purpose of Trip

The aims of this trip were to:

- Present the USP DQI workplan and accomplishments to date
- Brief the NMCP about DQI strategies and deliverables to support NMCP goals
- Liaise with other partners with a goal of complementing their activities

Source of Funding

This trip was funded by the USAID/Ghana Mission-PMI program.

Overview of Activities

1. PMI Ghana Partners Meeting

Present: Dr. Paul Psychas, PMI Ghana; Ms. Barbara Jones, Deputy Chief of Party, CHPS-TA; Mr. Felix Nyanor-Fosu, Netmark; Mr. Richard E. Killian, Chief of Party EngenderHealth, QHP; Mr. Kwesi Graham, Chief of Party, RTI International; Egbert K. Bruce, Resident Logistics Advisor, JSI/Deliver; Mr. Albert Nettey, JSI/Deliver; Mr. Eghan Kwesi, Strengthening Pharmaceutical Systems Program (MSH/SPS); Ms. Susan Wright, Reproductive Health & Child Survival Advisor, USAID; GSCP Representative; Dr. Daniel Bempong, Chemist IV, USP DQI

Each partner organization presented their plans and achievements to date, and each presentation was followed by a question and answer session. The National Malaria Control Program director could not attend the meeting due to a conflicting event, but Dr. Paul Psychas was to brief the director about the meeting later on that day.

The DQI presentation elaborated on the following program targets for FY 2009:

- Monitor the quality of antimalarial medicines in selected sentinel sites in the various administrative regions and in Accra
- Assess the capacity of NQCL to conduct confirmatory QC testing of antimalarials at collected at sentinel sites

The presentation also provided details of the following DQI accomplishments:

- Assessment of Ghana's drug QA/QC capacity in October 2008
- Planning workshop to establishing an antimalarial medicines quality monitoring program in Ghana. The participants in the workshop included FDB, NQCL, MCP, and WHO
- 5 Minilabs[®] purchased for the monitoring program

After the DQI presentation, Ms. Susan Wright (USAID) expressed interest in collaborating with DQI to sample oral contraceptives available from private pharmacy outlets in Ghana.

2. Visit to the FDB

Present: Reverend Jonathan Martey, Ag. Deputy CEO (Drugs); Dr. Daniel Bempong

Rev. Martey briefly described the structure of the FDB in the country and elaborated on plans the FDB has for the NQCL. He explained that, because of financial concerns, work on the new site for the FDB has come to a standstill. Funds have now been allotted to complete the sections of the site that will house the NQCL.

Following the visit, Rev. Martey made arrangements for Dr. Bempong to tour the NQCL premises.

3. Tour of the NQCL

Participants: Mr Cheetham Mingle, MSc (FDB-NQCL); Dr. Daniel Bempong

Mr. Mingle showed Dr. Bempong around various sections of the facility, including the microbiology laboratory. He explained that the laboratory performs evaluations of pharmaceutical products to support the FDB in its decision making. Dr. Bempong reiterated the comments made by a DQI team in a prior visit, saying that the facility in its current form is not appropriate for a QC laboratory. Mr. Mingle added that there are plans to move the laboratories into a new facility.

Next Steps

Planned DQI activities in Ghana:

- Training in sampling and use of Minilabs[®] – February 2009
- Assessment and service of equipment – February 2009
- First round of sampling and testing (Minilab[®] and confirmatory) – March 2009
- Data reporting and dissemination to stakeholders – June 2009
- Second round of sampling and testing – June 2009
- Data reporting and dissemination to stakeholders – September 2009
- Final report issued – September 2009