

WAHO officials, others meet VP

by Sheriff Lanka

The Vice President and Minister of Women's Affairs, Aja Dr Isatu Njie-Saïdy yesterday received in audience at Kairaba Beach Hotel, Dr Placido M Cardoso, the director general of the West African Health Organisation (WAHO) and officials of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

Dr Placido M Cardoso and delegation are in Banjul to conduct and contact on the countries with their group and see what is going on with regards to health information system. He said the objectives of the visit among other things are to informed Ecowas authorities about the health situation of the population saying they report on the health information on the ground.

"This is why we decided to come to see and find out what are some of the bottlenecks and difficulties and together how we can address those difficulties" he said. He said they also want sensitise officials about the importance of data coordination.

He added that since they arrive in the country, they have seen a lot of improvements in the health sector adding that they want to establish this networking with all stakeholders.

WAHO boss further used the opportunity to commend the Gambian leader, for his development strides not only in the health sectors but all the sectors of the country's development.

"It is now easy to find new health facilities around the country and infrastructural development among others. In the health sector, everything is important and periodic and with the limited resources you cannot do everything at the onetime," he said.

He spoke at length about some of the



giant strides registered in the health education system in the country saying WAHO has been given some support to The Gambia.

Fatou Lamin Faye, the minister of Basic and Secondary Education who is also overseeing the Health and Social Welfare said team work is an important aspect in the realisation of any development initiative. She then welcomed the WAHO official in the country and assured them of their cooperation.

Presentation of surgical items to RVTH

At the ceremony, the Ebo Town, Venner of Norway, The Gambia Friendship Society also donated surgical equipment to the Royal Victorial Teaching Hospital. The equipment according to donors, worth over one million dalasis and where inspected by RVTH officials and recommended to be

new and good equipment that is earmarked to improve the delivery of quality health care in the country's only main referral hospital.

Speaking at the ceremony, Babucarr Ngum, the public relations officer of RVTH who deputised for the chief medical director, said he was aware of the items and even inspected them saying it is policy at the RVTH before they took delivery of any donation to first look at it whether they need then, expired items or not among others.

He expressed gratitude to the donors describing the equipment as useful and good that are greatly needed in the hospital at the moment.

For her part, Ambjore Juliusen, the chairperson of the Ebo Town Venner of Norway The Gambia Friendship Society said all the equipment were shipped from Norway and comprises and are all new. She promised that they will continue to support the country especially with

regards to the delivery of health services in the country.

For her part, Vice President Njie-Saïdy on behalf of the Gambian leader and the entire government welcomed the director general of WAHO and his team to The Gambia.

She emphasised the need for team work and commitment saying it is key in the development of any sector. She used the occasion to reminded the gathering that most of the facilities we call here in The Gambia as major health facilities are regional hospitals in other places adding that the Gambian leader has brought in equipment, set up medicals school as well as building capacity for doctors in this country.

"President Jammeh brought in Cubans doctors as well as send young Gambians to other part of the world for training. I think that is what is expected of a good leader," she said.

She spoke at length on the progress registered in the health sector. She then challenged health officials to share information and data collection in the realisation of their ardent goals.

She then commended the Ebo Town Venner of Norway The Gambia Friendship society for their support.

Meeting with health officials

Officials of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare also met Vice President Njie-Saïdy to brief him on the introduction of the AHINI vaccination as well as to seek her blessings as the ministry is set to embark on a national vaccination of pandemic influenza AHINI from the 26th -30th of July 2010.

Speaking at the ceremony, Abdoulie Camara, the national coordinator of the AHINI Vaccines Campaign, told the

gathering that The Gambia is one of the ninety-five countries eligible for donation of vaccines from the World Health Organisation in December 2009, saying that a national redeployment has been has been developed and approved by the minister of Health and Social Welfare and sent to the director general of the World Health Organisation in Geneva -Switzerland for approval.

Camara used the occasion to reminded the gathering that the target population of this mass vaccination campaign are health workers because the health system to be running effectively and efficiently as expected in all countries.

"This is why the number one priority is the health workers from the health ministry and other health workers from both private and public. The second group are the pregnant women, who are always vulnerable due to their pregnancy," he said.

According to him, because of the global data that they received from the WHO since the pronouncement of this pandemic influenza in June 2009, the diabetes patients, children (10-11 years), asthmatic, hypertension patients and other chronic disease will all be vaccinated during the period.

He maintained that they are targeting this vulnerable groups because of the globally data was put together these groups are the one mostly affected due to their deteriorating health conditions saying health is a number priority in the country's vision 2020 blue print.

He revealed that since the outbreak of the pandemic influenza 2005, they have been collaborating with all the civil societies organisations to create more awareness about the pandemic.