



WEST AFRICAN INSTITUTE
OF PUBLIC HEALTH

STRENGTHENING ONE HEALTH: THE WEST AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S ROLE IN ADVANCING THE NEW PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER IN AFRICA

A PROGRAMME REVIEW NOTE BY DR FRANCIS
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by

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Background:

In the context of a changing global health landscape, the West African Institute of Public Health (WAIPH) and its academy have emerged as key actors in strengthening One Health in West Africa. With a commitment to the principles outlined in the *West Africa Regional Charter of Public Health*¹ and the *One Health Commission*², WAIPH's One Health program recognizes the interconnectedness of human health, animal health, and ecosystems. This brief will explore how WAIPH is aligning its efforts with the *New Public Health Order in Africa*³ and the *One Health Joint Plan of Action (2022-2026)*⁴ to foster a multidisciplinary approach to developing, incubating and growing the next generation of public health experts.

Introduction:

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the interdependence of human health, animal health, and the environment.⁵ This holistic approach, known as One Health, emphasizes the interconnectedness of these three domains and promotes collaborative efforts to address health challenges. The West African Institute of Public Health (WAIPH), through its academy, is at the forefront of strengthening One Health in line with the New Public Health Order in Africa. This brief aims to explore how WAIPH is contributing to this paradigm shift, drawing on references such as the West Africa Regional Charter of Public Health, the One Health Commission, the One Health Joint Plan of Action (2022-2026), and the 2022 *Mid-Year Report - The Lancet One Health Commission*.⁶ The Institute is also a strong member of the planetary health movement because of its intersection with One Health strategy and is an active member of the *Planetary Health Alliance -West Africa Hub*.⁷

I. Understanding the One Health Approach:

The One Health approach recognizes that the health of humans, animals, and ecosystems are interconnected. In Africa, this interconnectedness is often evident due to the close relationship between communities, livestock, and the environment. By adopting a One

¹ [THE GLOBAL CHARTER FOR THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH](#)

The West African Regional Charter for Public Health expands on the Charter's original core services and functions with core values, which establish ethics in ... <https://www.wfpha.org/document-upload/the-global-charter-for-the-public's-health.pdf>

² One Health Commission <https://www.onehealthcommission.org>

³ The New Public Health Order: Africa's health security Agenda. Africa CDC. 4 Apr 2023 — The African continent has demonstrated decisive leadership throughout its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, leveraging lessons learned from ... <https://africacdc.org/news-item/the-new-public-health-order-africas-health-security-agenda/>

⁴ *One Health Joint Plan of Action (2022 - 2026)* – UNEP. United Nations Environment Programme <https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/one-health-joint-plan-action-2022-2026#:~:text=The%20One%20Health%20Joint%20Plan%20of%20Action%2C%20developed%20through%20a,animal-plant-environment%20interface.>

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (.gov) *Working Together for One Health | One Health | CDC* <https://www.cdc.gov/onehealth/in-action/working-together-for-one-health.html#:~:text=Did%20you%20know%20that%20human,spread%20between%20animals%20and%20people.>

⁶ 2022 *Mid-Year Report - The Lancet One Health Commission* [uio.no https://www.med.uio.no/helsam/english/research/centres/global-health/news-and-events/news/2022/2022-mid-year-report.html](https://www.med.uio.no/helsam/english/research/centres/global-health/news-and-events/news/2022/2022-mid-year-report.html)

⁷ Planetary Health Membership and Hubs <https://www.planetaryhealthalliance.org/pha-members> , <https://www.planetaryhealthalliance.org/pha-regional-hubs>

Health perspective, WAIPH acknowledges the need for multidisciplinary collaboration to address complex health challenges effectively.

II. The New Public Health Order in Africa:

The New Public Health Order in Africa represents a shift towards a person and system-centered paradigm in public health. Dr. Francis Ohanyido, the Director-General of WAIPH, emphasizes the importance of stronger multidisciplinary approaches and the cultivation of visionary and innovative leaders to ensure quality service delivery and leave no one behind. WAIPH is playing a crucial role in catalyzing this paradigm shift through its various initiatives.

III. The Role of the West African Institute of Public Health:

a. Capacity Building: The WAIPH Academy:

WAIPH's Academy plays a vital role in strengthening One Health by providing comprehensive training programs and capacity-building initiatives. Through its Academy, WAIPH nurtures a new generation of committed leaders equipped with the knowledge and skills to address complex health challenges from a One Health perspective. The Academy offers courses and workshops on topics such as zoonotic diseases, ecosystem health, and cross-sectoral collaboration.

b. Policy Development and Advocacy:

WAIPH actively engages in policy development and advocacy (*The Policy-Advocacy Complex*) to promote the integration of One Health principles into national and regional health strategies for West Africa in line with the leadership of the West African Health Organisation (WAHO).⁸ The organization works closely with governments, policymakers, and other stakeholders to raise awareness about the importance of One Health and its relevance to public health in Africa. WAIPH also actively participates in regional and international forums, in the spirit of the One Health Joint Plan of Action (2022-2026), to contribute to the development of coordinated strategies and action plans.

c. Research and Knowledge Generation:

⁸ The One Health Technical Meeting of the ECOWAS Member State <https://www.wahooas.org/web-ooas/en/actualites/benin-burkina-faso-cabo-verde-cote-divoire-gambia-ghana-guinee-guinee-bissau-liberia-11>

WAIPH fosters research and knowledge generation to enhance the evidence base for One Health interventions. The organization collaborates with academic institutions, research centers, and other partners to conduct studies and generate data on the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health. The aim of this is to generate researches that contribute to evidence-based decision-making and the development of innovative solutions to address health challenges in Africa.

IV. The West Africa Regional Charter of Public Health:

The West Africa Charter of Public Health, a regional framework for public health governance and action, provides a solid foundation for WAIPH's initiatives. The Charter recognizes the importance of functions that strengthen One Health approaches and emphasizes the need for collaboration across sectors and disciplines and this includes transdisciplinary capacity building. WAIPH aligns its efforts with the principles outlined in the Charter, ensuring coherence and synergy in its actions.

Conclusion:

The West African Institute of Public Health, through its academy, is playing a pivotal role in strengthening One Health in line with the New Public Health Order in Africa. By focusing on capacity building, policy development and advocacy, and research and knowledge generation, WAIPH is contributing to the cultivation of multidisciplinary approaches and the development of visionary leaders in public health. By embracing the interconnectedness of humans, animals, and ecosystems, WAIPH is catalyzing a paradigm shift towards a person and system-centered approach that leaves no one behind in ensuring quality service delivery.

Further Reading:

1. *West Africa Regional Charter of Public Health*
2. *One Health Commission*
3. *One Health Joint Plan of Action (2022-2026)*
4. *The Lancet One Health Commission 2022 Mid-Year Report*