



HEALTH DATA
COLLABORATIVE
DATA FOR HEALTH AND
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Report of the Launch of the Cameroon Health Data Collaborative (CHDC)



Ministère de la Santé Publique

Context of the Cameroonian Health Information System

Cameroon's health information system (HIS) is highly fragmented. Despite a number of initiatives by the Ministry of Health (MINSANTE) data quality improves only slowly, which forces partners to collect their own information to justify their work vis-à-vis their hierarchies. These parallel structures further weaken the system making it a problem of circular nature.

The National Public Health Observatory (*Observatoire National de la Santé Publique – ONSP*), the Health Information Unit (*Cellule d'Information Sanitaire – CIS*) and the Department to Fight against Illness, Epidemics and Pandemics (*Direction de la Lutte contre la Maladie, les Epidémies et les Pandémies – DLMEP*) work rigorously to improve the availability, promptness and quality of health data. Intermediate results include the harmonization of tools, the reduction and adaptation of indicators, and the introduction of a surveillance system. Nevertheless, major structural issues remain and may only be solved collectively if the MINSANTE and partners join their means.

Sort history of the collaborative

The collaboration of health actors remains under its potential in Cameroon. As all actors share the same need to use high quality data, under the initiative of WHO, the lead of ONSP, CIS and DLMEP and the technical support of CDC and GIZ the idea of the *Cameroon Health Data Collaborative (CHDC)* was born in September 2016. After several technical meetings, the group decided that they would like to join the wider global network of the *Health Data Collaborative* as one of ten African countries. The group established their terms of reference, a chart and a work plan.

Purpose of the launch

On December 21st 2016 the official launch of the Cameroon Health Data Collaborative took place at Hilton Hotel Yaoundé from 10am – 12pm. 90 participants joined the event. The agenda was as followed:

Time	Topic	Resource person
10:00-11:00	Arrival of participants and the Minister of Health / His Representative	MINSANTE
11:00-11:15	Opening Speech	WHO Cameroon
11:15-11:45	Presentation of the Cameroon Health Data Collaborative & Questions and Discussion	ONSP/CIS/DLMEP
11:45-11:55	Speech of the Minister or his representative	MINSANTE
11:55-12:10	Photo & official closure of the ceremony & cocktail	MINSANTE

The launch marked the official institutionalization of the CHDC as a working group of the MINSANTE and its partners with the aim to improve health data quality. The ceremony was presided by General Inspector of Services of the Ministry of Public of Health with the Country Representative of WHO. Amongst the participants were the Director of CDC representing USAID, PEPFAR, and PeaceCorps.



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Key messages

The speeches and presentation were aligned in its message to the participants:

- We need to stop duplicating work
- We need to put resources together
- We are in need to high quality data
- We need to build a resilient routine data collection
- We need to have all the programs on board



Questions and discussions

Throughout the discussion following the presentation (see annex) certain key points repeatedly came up. Participants highlighted the difficulties they encountered in their day-to-day data, which includes to fill the same information several times for different programs and partners, a lack of harmonization of tools and approaches, and too few people to support the unstructured system.

At the same time, participants expressed that they wished for better coordination and collaboration. The launch of the CHDC was perceived as the moment in time to make a difference and something that was long overdue.

Next steps

The next step after the launch will be the first working group meeting, which is planned to be held in the third week of January. For this purpose, the coordination team will prepare the agenda and invite a colleague from Malawi to share his experiences in the scope of a South-South Collaboration. As the Malawian Ministry of Health underwent the same procedure already successfully, the CHDC hopes to benefit from the exchange when making their first steps.

