



WEST AFRICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION OUEST AFRICAINE DE LA SANTE
ORGANIZAÇÃO OESTE AFRICANA DA SAÚDE

PRESS RELEASE

March 6, 2025, Oslo, Norway

VISIT OF THE OAS DIRECTOR GENERAL TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE COALITION FOR EPIDEMIC PREPAREDNESS INNOVATIONS (CEPI).



March 6, 2025, Oslo, Norway, The Director General of the **West African Health Organization (WAHO)**, **Dr. Melchior Athanase Joël Codjovi AïSSI**, paid an official visit to the headquarters of the **Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)**. This visit marks a significant milestone in strengthening collaboration between WAHO and CEPI, consolidating their shared commitment to health security in West Africa and beyond.

In his address, Dr. Melchior AïSSI emphasized the importance of cooperation between WAHO and CEPI, particularly their joint efforts within the Lassa Fever Coalition, aimed at effectively addressing this persistent threat in the region. Through an ambitious research program, this partnership has made significant strides in combating Lassa fever, an endemic disease in West Africa.



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Dr. Melchior AÏSSI also highlighted the challenges posed by climate change, which could increase the risk of Lassa fever exposure to nearly **600 million people**. He called for exploring new avenues of collaboration to develop accessible vaccines and treatments, thereby enhancing preparedness and response to this disease.

A major announcement was made during this visit: the organization of the **2nd International Conference on Lassa Fever in West Africa**, scheduled for **September 22-26, 2025, in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire**. This conference will provide a critical platform for sharing scientific advancements, strengthening collaboration networks, and developing strategies to eradicate this disease.

Dr. Melchior AÏSSI concluded by expressing his gratitude to the CEPI team for their commitment and for organizing this strategic meeting. He also underscored the importance of enhanced cooperation to build a safer and more resilient West Africa in the face of current and future health challenges.

About the West African Health Organization (WAHO)

The West African Health Organization (WAHO) is the Specialized Health Institution of ECOWAS, established in 1987 to coordinate regional health initiatives across West Africa. Headquartered in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, WAHO works to harmonize health policies, pool resources, and promote collaboration among Member States. Its primary mandate is to improve health standards and strengthen health systems throughout the subregion. Guided by its vision, WAHO strives to be a proactive driver of regional health integration, delivering impactful and cost-effective health interventions for West African communities

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