



2nd SUMMATIVE CONGRESS
Youndè Cameroon 11-12 July 2017

CLOSING COMMENTS

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It has been our tradition in ARC to conclude our meetings with closing comments and for the past twelve months it has been my privilege to share my closing thoughts with you.

I imagine that you are all feeling a little sad and maybe also confused and concerned at the thought that this most probably will be our last ARC meeting. I know I am feeling sad that we appear to have come to the end of the ARC journey that we have taken together, a journey that has achieved some very positive outcomes.

But of course we all know that nothing lasts forever, and as one door closes, other doors open. We need to have the vision and the courage to look for those open doors and take the necessary steps to walk a new and different path.

The first ARC West and Central Summative was held in July 2015, so we have spent two years together. In that time we have held two Summative Congresses, including this one, three learning sessions, and six grants have been awarded.

Through ARC you have been given excellent tools and experience to use in developing facility level projects. I want to emphasise the importance of nursing and midwifery leaders being involved in facility level projects. It is only when you go to facilities and investigate and analyse the care being provided that you can see where quality improvements can be made. As nursing and midwifery leaders, you have the opportunity and the capacity to translate facility level learning into national policy and changes to practice and it is my challenge to you that you ensure that the projects you have undertaken and concluded as part of ARC are scaled up and translated into the provision of quality nursing and midwifery care nationally.

I want to congratulate all the country teams for their dedication and commitment to ARC and to the successful completion of their projects over the past two years. This year, the addition of baseline and endline facility data collection has been an additional challenge but the assessments have and will generate rich information and have been a positive learning experience. The ARC faculty is very aware of the pressures on your time and energy due to the senior positions you hold within your own countries and are very grateful to you for the work you have done.

I want to thank our technical experts who have shared their expertise with us at this meeting: the two nurses who shared their experience of project implementation; and the consultants who have been working with the QUADS. I also want to thank our guest speakers. The presentation from Mr Joseph Nkwain on task sharing; that of Dr Mary Atanga on the WHO Professional Regulatory Framework; and Mr Martin Tokam on monitoring and evaluation. The presentation from Alicia Hunter Warner from CDC Atlanta in

sharing with us so frankly PEPFAR's priority directions was very helpful in thinking about the way forward.

I want to emphasise the presentation by Dr Mary Atanga from WHO and encourage you to take the opportunity to visit some of the countries in east and southern Africa which have developed comprehensive professional development frameworks including a statutory and independent Nursing and Midwifery Council with responsibility for regulating nursing and midwifery and developing and enforcing standards and scopes of practice. There is a lot that can be learned from other countries in the region including the development of mandatory national continuing professional development programs. It would be useful to have some regional dialogue in West and Central Africa around professional regulation to promote consistency of approach and perhaps as QUADs you could take leadership on this issue.

I want to thank the Care and Health Program staff for all their work in coordinating the logistics for the meeting with such efficiency and good humour; and the interpreters for their excellent and professional translation for those of us who unfortunately do not speak French. I also want to acknowledge my fellow ARC Faculty members who have generously shared their knowledge and experience on behalf of ARC in a warm, open, and collegiate manner. I particularly want to acknowledge Dr Muadi Mukenge who has made an amazing contribution to ARC West and Central, to the QUADS, and to the successful completion of projects. Muadi's boundless energy, her capacity to speak to you in your own language, and her West Africa background and understanding of West Africa culture has been a very important factor in the success of ARC West and Central.

Finally, I want to thank Cameroon for hosting this meeting and to thank the Ministry of Health representative, Dr Elise Seukap, for graciously sharing her time with us yesterday morning and Dr Georges Etoundi for honouring us with his presence this afternoon. We appreciated the support of the Cameroon Ministry of Health for the meeting.

The personal and professional growth we have all experienced over the time we have spent together has been significant. I look around the room and see nursing and midwifery leaders who have grown so much in learning, understanding, experience, and confidence. The difference in the quality of content, coherence and confidence in the presentation of the project reports between this Summative and the Summative in July 2016 in Cote d'Ivoire is really remarkable. The opportunity that ARC has provided has contributed immeasurably to that personal and professional growth.

I encourage you to work to maintain the close friendships you have made with the QUADS from the other countries. It is important for the region that you continue to work closely together and learn from each other. There is still a lot of work for you to do. Your final project reports and the facility assessments which will keep you busy over the next few months.

I am hopeful that we will all meet again in the future as ARC family. Thank you for your friendship and your commitment to nursing and midwifery. Safe travels home and take care of yourselves until we meet again.