

Ghana plays host to major African healthcare business integrity and ethics forum

- Over a hundred Pharma industry management and healthcare professionals, medical and scientific advisors receive training on how to implement compliance programs.
- The African Stakeholder Forum will discuss progress across Africa in raising the standards in the ethics and business integrity space.
- Part of the Forum is a session to raise awareness about the impact of fake medicines in eroding trust in the governments, healthcare professionals, patients and manufacturers.

Accra, Ghana – 18-19 September 2018 – The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations ([IFPMA](#)) holds two-day business ethics and integrity event combining training, discussion forum and awareness raising with aim to increase the level of ethical conduct. It is broadly acknowledged that an efficient healthcare system depends on mutual trust between manufacturers of medicines and vaccines, governments and health authorities, healthcare professionals and patients. The challenge is frequently to apply business ethics and integrity into the day to day reality of the healthcare community. IFPMA is organizing the “Business Integrity Days” as part of its mission to support efforts worldwide to uphold ethical standards. Participants will be informed about the new [IFPMA Code of Practice](#) to be launched in January 2019.

The event kicks off with a 1-day workshop that makes the “business case” for ethical conduct within organizations. Participants include representatives from national pharmaceutical trade associations, ethics and compliance professionals, general managers, healthcare professionals, medical and scientific advisors as well as in-house counsels and sales representatives. The program provides practice training on how to interact with healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses, pharmacists) with regards to promotional and medical information, how to interact with patient organizations, and how to set up and run successful compliance programs.

Participants receive training on the local implementation of the soon to be launched new IFPMA Code of Practice. The Code aims to build trust within the healthcare community and the public, guiding all the companies and associations who are members of IFPMA to operate, act and communicate in an ethical manner. Since it was first drawn up in 1981, the Code has been constantly revised in order to keep up with society’s expectation for the research-based pharmaceutical industry. This latest sixth edition, coming into force on January 1, 2019, includes a global ban on gifts and promotional aids for prescription-only medicines.

Thomas Cueni, Director General of the IFPMA, explains: *“Society’s expectations of the R&D-based biopharmaceutical industry, quite rightly, constantly raise the bar. We need to meet these expectations and live up to our commitments wherever we operate in the world, to win and retain the trust patients place in our products. It is important that we train and offer guidance to our members companies and associations about the Code of Practice. We are pleased that this event has attracted such a high level of engagement, which clearly demonstrates a keen desire among medicine manufacturers and healthcare professionals to behave ethically”*. Mr Cueni invites the participants to join him in celebrating AREPI, the association representing pharmaceutical manufacturers in Ghana, becoming a member of the IFPMA.

The second day is dedicated to the African Stakeholder Forum looking at how trust in health authorities and health professionals is paramount to implementing a fully efficient healthcare system. Roundtable participants discuss the progress Ghana and other African countries have been making in raising their standards in the ethics and business integrity space, which is contributing to IFPMA’s goal to create a level playing field in Africa.



Finally, participants heard about the [Fight the Fakes](#) campaign, the first campaign to address the issue of responsibility from the beginning to the end of the pharmaceutical supply chain, by involving and coordinating stakeholders from a wide range of backgrounds. The World Health Organization estimates that as much as 30% of drugs on the Ghanaian market are fake¹. These fake products undermine patient's trust in healthcare systems. Ideas to prevent fake drugs from eroding the trust between patients, healthcare professionals and manufacturers of genuine medicines were discussed in a panel session.

About IFPMA

IFPMA represents the research-based pharmaceutical companies and associations across the globe. The research-based pharmaceutical industry's 2 million employees discover, develop, and deliver medicines and vaccines that improve the life of patients worldwide. Based in Geneva, IFPMA has official relations with the United Nations and contributes industry expertise to help the global health community find solutions that improve global health.

About AREPI

The Association of Representatives of Ethical Pharmaceutical Industries (AREPI), an arm of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ghana, is an umbrella body of about a dozen multinational pharmaceutical companies operating within Ghana with the primary aim of driving access to innovative medicines for all Ghanaians. Member companies sign on to, and are bound by, an AREPI code of marketing which ensures that these companies operate professionally and in the best interest of the Ghanaian patient. AREPI has existed in Ghana for over 20 years and has, in this period, worked with various stakeholders to help mitigate the country's challenges in healthcare delivery. As part of AREPI contributions to Ghana's healthcare development, we have over the years;

- Partnered with the government of Ghana to develop policies for critical disease areas.
- Supported public health programmes including the provision of heavily subsidised, and in some cases free, medicines to be used as part of the nation's Reproductive health and Childhood vaccination programmes
- Supported knowledge enhancement, professional development and capacity building for healthcare professionals
- Supported public disease awareness and patient support programmes

¹ <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-01-11-fighting-the-spread-of-fake-drugs-in-africa>