

Launch of the World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology African Network (WAAVP-AN) in Cotonou, Benin 26-27 June 2024



The WAAVP-AN and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) hosted the launch of the WAAVP-AN in Benin, Cotonou from the 26 to 27 June 2024. The WAAVP-AN is an umbrella network of people and institutions working towards the better control of parasitic diseases of animals. The network aims at advancing research, training and the practice of veterinary parasitology for improvement of animal welfare and sustainable livestock production on the African continent.

The theme of the launch was *“Advancing veterinary parasitology in Africa for enhanced control of animal parasitic diseases”*. The meeting was officially opened by Hon. Gaston Dossouhoui, Benin’s Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries, who in his opening speech, emphasised the urgent need for a cross-border approach to combat animal parasites and expressed Benin’s commitment to supporting the network’s objectives. Other dignitaries that attended the launch included representatives from various African government ministries, academic institutions, research institutes and animal health associated organizations. In line with its aim to advance veterinary parasitology research and training, the first call for proposals for the WAAVP-AN grants was also announced during the launch.

The Faculty of Veterinary Science was represented by Prof Banie Penzhorn, who was a keynote speaker, Prof Kgomotso Sibeko-Matjila, who is a member of the WAAVP-AN steering committee and Prof Tshepo Matjila.



(Prof's Banie Penzhorn, Kgomotso Sibeko-Matjila and Tshepo Matjila at the launch of the WAAVP-AN in Benin, Cotonou from the 26 to 27 June 2024)

The meeting also allowed for some leisure time for networking and socialising. The highlight being the tour of the city of Cotonou, with its rich history of women warriors and the army of Danxomè created by Queen Tassi Hangbé, the only woman to rule the kingdom from 1708 to 1711 and a melting pot of west African cultures.



(The statue of the Amazon, erected on the Amazon esplanade in Cotonou, Benin)

The launch ended on a high note with renewed energies and commitments from the delegates to advance veterinary parasitology in Africa and to share opportunities that enhance access to resources and promote training, research and networking.

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