

PRESS RELEASE

The Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation and the UK Department for International Development sign a Memorandum of Understanding for the support of the Ifakara Health Institute's strategic plan

Dar es Salaam, Monday December 14, 2009, The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the UK Department for International Development (DfID) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in support of the five-year strategic plan of the Ifakara Health Institute (IHI). The MoU also establishes the mechanisms for the development partners to provide pooled funding for the Institute.

The government of Switzerland, a founding members in the IHI Board of Trustee, has agreed to contribute CHF 2 million (equivalent to Tanzania Shillings 2.6 billion), while the UK government through its Department for International Development (DfID) will provide £4 million (equivalent to Tanzania Shillings 8.7 billion) for the implementation of the IHI strategic plan between 2008 and 2013. The MoU will be signed at IHI offices in Dar es Salaam by the Swiss Ambassador in Tanzania Adrian Schläpfer, the Head of DfID Tanzania Darren Welch and the Chairperson of the IHI Board of Trustees Dr. Hassan Mshinda.

The Embassy of Ireland is already supporting the IHI strategic plan and plans to join the new funding arrangement in 2010. Other development partners have shown great interest in supporting the IHI strategic plan and will participate in the future.

The funding by development partners will supplement the support the Government of Tanzania is already providing to IHI to make it one of leading health information resources institutions in Tanzania and the region. The support of the Government is expected to increase over the years.

Ifakara Health Institute has made significant contributions in the improvement of health in Tanzania, and in Africa as a whole. Its research outputs have influenced local and international policy changes leading to improved health delivery systems and scale of interventions that have reduce the burden of diseases like malaria and schistosomiasis in many places.

Commenting on this occasion, the Swiss Ambassador said: "Switzerland is proud to have been associated with the Ifakara Health Institute since it was first established more than 50 years ago. The



Institute started as a field laboratory station of the Swiss Tropical Institute in 1957 and was registered as a Tanzanian Trust governed by the Governments of Tanzania and Switzerland in 1996. Since then, the track record of IHI in research and development has been truly remarkable and contributed substantially towards the improvement of health conditions in this country, and in particular towards the fight against malaria”.

The Head of the UK’s DfID in Tanzania Darren Welch said. “We are pleased to be able to support IHI and its newly approved strategic plan. We congratulate the staff and leadership of IHI on this new plan. Our funding will help IHI provide citizens and policy makers with more information about the delivery of health services in Tanzania. This information will help us all understand better the results that are being delivered through the health sector budget. We calculate that we provide about TzSh 20 billion a year towards the health budget, and it is important that we can measure what is being achieved in the sector.”

In 2008, IHI introduced its new five-year strategic plan that aims to test ways to maximize coverage, quality and effectiveness of health interventions; evaluate new approaches to control major diseases; investigate the determinants of leading public health problems; monitor and evaluate the impact of national and global initiatives on public health in Tanzania; ensure that research results are disseminated and put into practice; build up joint, specialist training programmes with universities; and consolidate and strengthen its organization and management. IHI intends to ensure that its research continues to reflect local—and not just international—priorities; to fulfill its potential as a source of information for the Tanzanian government; and to entice talented scientists to remain in when they could perhaps earn more abroad.

Earlier, the Chairperson of IHI Board of Trustees who is also the Director General for the Commission for Science and Technology Dr. Hassan Mshinda thanked the development partners for their continued commitment to assist Tanzania achieve her MDG 4, 5 and 6. SDC and DfID support the research operations, core and service operations.

When presenting the strategic plan to the development partners, the Director of IHI Dr. Salim Abdulla said his Institute needs 127 billion/= to undertake research operations, institutional development, core and service operations in the next five years. According to Dr. Abdulla, the institute will spend 66% of the total financial resources for research operations, 26% for core costs and 8% as investment costs. The framework of partnership which is established by this MOU opens up a new chapter in IHI operations and will support reaching the objectives of the new IHI Strategic Plan 2008-2013.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Ifakara Health Institute (www.ihl.or.tz)

The Ifakara Health Institute (IHI), formerly IHRDC, is an autonomous, non-profit health research institute. It started in 1957 as a Swiss Tropical Institute Field Laboratory (STIFL). It was established by Prof. Rudolf Geigy, the founding Director of STI. IHI was registered as a Tanzanian Trust in 1996 under the leadership of the Board of Trustees chaired by Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. The mission of IHI is to develop and sustain a district-based health research and resource centre capable of generating new knowledge and relevant information for public health policy and action. It has six branches in Bagamoyo, Dar es Salaam, Mtwara, Kigoma, Rufiji and Ifakara.

For more information, contact: Director, IHI, sabdulla@ihl.or.tz

DFID

The Department for International Development (DFID) is the part of the UK government that manages Britain's aid to poor countries and works to get rid of extreme poverty. DFID works with governments of developing countries, charities, businesses and international bodies and all other partners who share the ambition to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. DFID has an office in Tanzania and provides the country with £150 million per year. £103.5m of this was paid as general budget support in 2009.

For more information, contact: Tim Harris, email: T-Harris@dfid.gov.uk

SDC Cooperation Office Tanzania (www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/tanzania)

The Swiss Cooperation office is part of the Embassy of Switzerland in Tanzania. It oversees the development assistance programme in Tanzania. The aim of Swiss Cooperation's programme is to contribute to the elimination of poverty in Tanzania and to create the basis for sustained economic growth and good governance.

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