

## **National Institute of Health, Somalia**

### **Summary of the establishment and the progress since the approval of the National Institute of Health**

The National Institute of Health (NIH) for Somalia has been approved by the Somali Government in December 2013. It is an autonomous public health institute under the Ministry of Health, Somalia. It will be started with the establishment of the Infectious Disease Control Division with the establishment of the National Public Health Reference Laboratory and a strong surveillance unit. Later gradually, it will be established other relevant Divisions such as Epidemiology, Research and Training Division, Environmental Medicine Division, Food and Drug Quality Assurance Division and Emergency Preparedness and Response Division.

The NIH has the full political support of the Somali Government. It will have an Executive Board which will consist high level persons from different fields in the country.

The NIH is a new institute. We are now having soon the offices at the Central Public Health Reference Laboratory. We are also going soon to install all the logistics needed for those offices. The work of the central laboratory is soon complete. We have already the staff for this. The Website and the E-mails for the institute are in progress and will be ready at the end of this month or at latest first half of next month.

We have also the staff for infectious diseases control including TB, HIV/AIDS and Malaria. There is also staff already working for Vaccine Preventable Diseases, Mental Health and Health Promotion. But most of these staff are now part of the Ministry of Health and will join the new institute.

The establishment of the Website and the E-mail addresses for the staff of the NIH Somalia has been started and the work is in progress. Soon, the NIH Somalia website can be found at:  
<http://www.nih.gov.so/>.

### **Contacts and future partnership and collaborations**

We have now started establishing partnership and collaboration with other public health institutes and other International Organizations.

For **Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) Kenya and East Africa Office**, we have started already collaborating with them a multi-drug resistant tuberculosis project for Somalia: “Preventing Cross-Border Regional Spread of Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis in Somalia”. This project will have an effect on Kenya. We have also discussed with CDC Kenya the possibility for NIH staff participation for short-term and long-term laboratory training offered by CDC Kenya.

We had also a telephone conference **with CDC HQ in Atlanta, USA** for possible future partnership and collaboration. We have now a contact person there. This telephone conference was also participated by Courtenay Dusenbury, Director IANPHI Co-secretariat at Emory University, USA.

We had also meetings with **Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI)**. We agreed to establish a full partnership and collaboration once the Kenyan and the Somali Governments finalize an official agreement between the two countries for this. We are now on the process of working this issue. We have also met the Director of KEMRI and he is fully supporting the establishment of NIH (See also the attached document for KEMRI).

We were also in contact with the **International Organization for Migration (IOM) for Somalia** about assisting the NIH, especially with regard to support for the recruitment of new staff for the NIH. This process is still on-going. But hopefully will be completed soon.

We had a telephone conference with the **International Health Division at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH)** about the NIH. This was the first contact between our institutes. We agreed to continue the contact and see where and how we can work together. Norway as a country is heavily involved in the development of Somalia and there is a very big Somali-Norwegian Community in the country. Some of them are part of our NIH team. We had other contacts with them and now are willing to train some of our team who are Norwegian-Somali and in Oslo for technical and other issues related in assisting the new NIH for Somalia.

We had also a meeting with the **Norwegian Embassy for Somalia** about the establishment of the NIH and how they can support the NIH. We have discussed possible areas where the

Embassy can contribute. They find the idea of having such institute in Somalia a very positive one which will improve the lives of the Somali people.

We met also **members of the International Association for National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI)**, a member association of national public health institutes worldwide including CDC USA, FHI Norway, Robert Koch Institute of Germany, KEMRI of Kenya, Public Health Agency of Canada and many other public health institutes in developed and developing countries. We have already applied for membership at IANPHI and our membership is on process. We discussed the members of the association all the issues related for the new Somali institute. We have now received from the IANPHI the possibility of having a Consultant for assisting legal, policy and strategy for NIH Somalia. In the near future, we hope to have an IANPHI team in Somalia for political and technical support.

**Note:** All these happened in a short period since the approval of the NIH for Somalia. Still there is a lot of work ahead to be done. But this institute is important for the people of Somalia that we cannot fail it.

Therefore, we need both the moral and the technical support of the members of the International Association for National Public Health Institutes and other international organizations in making this mission of fully establishing the National Institute of Health for Somalia successful.

Many thanks,

Best regards,

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