

Media Text

A public private partnership for human resource development in health The new Tanzanian Training Centre for International Health officially inaugurated in Ifakara

Together with his Swiss public and private partners, the Honourable Minister for Health and Social Welfare of the United Republic of Tanzania, David Homeli Mwakyusa, officially inaugurated the new Tanzanian Training Centre for International Health (TTCIH) in Ifakara. All present partners, Walter Fust, Director General of the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC), as well as Klaus Leisinger, Director of the Novartis Foundation for Sustainable Development (NFSD) and the Minister himself praised the exemplary partnership that successfully transformed the old Clinical Officer Training Centre into the new TTCIH.

Ifakara. 11th April 2006. In his inaugural speech, the Honourable Minister, Professor David Homeli Mwakyusa, emphasized the importance of qualified health care staff in order to improve access to high-quality and efficient primary health services at district level for all populations and especially for the most vulnerable ones, who are often found in rural areas. He welcomed the fact that the Centre in Ifakara offers training for the position of Assistant Medical Officer (AMO) – a key position in the Tanzanian health system – making it one out of only five Centres in the country to offer this training.

More than 100 guests were invited to attend the inauguration of the new Training Centre in the presence of the Minister for Health and Social Welfare and the Swiss guests. Director General, Dr. Walter Fust reminded the audience that the traditionally close collaboration between Tanzania and Switzerland had some of its roots in Ifakara and highlighted that good technical and social knowledge of the health care staff are crucial in order to improve quality of health services. Therefore SDC accepted to co-finance this endeavour, together with the Ministry of Health, the Novartis Foundation and the Swiss Tropical Institute.

With reference to the history of Ifakara, Dr. Klaus Leisinger outlined that already in the 60s of last century Professor Rudolf Geigy had turned his vision of linking health research, training and medical practice into reality. Public private collaboration has been practiced in Ifakara since that time when the Basle based industry financed the setting up of the predecessor to the TTCIH while the Swiss Tropical Institute, still an important partner of the Training Centre initiative today, acted as implementing agency. Last but not least, Leisinger concluded that sustainable development can only be achieved with partners ready to engage in the long term and who are always ready to take on new challenges.

Following the inaugural speeches, the guests of honour received a guided tour around the new campus. Among the upgraded facilities, there are an auditorium with 120 seats, various seminar rooms, a library and a teaching laboratory as well as renovated student accommodation, staff houses, guest rooms and an upgraded administration block with reception hall. At the end of the tour, Honourable Minister Mwakyusa cut the ribbon and unveiled the inauguration stone at the administration building.

The main goal of the public private partnership is to establish the TTCIH as an organisation that is capable of providing quality training, facilities and services for continuous education in health. After two years of extensive work, carried out by local companies under the lead of the NGO SolidarMed, the old Clinical Officer Training Centre has become a state-of-the-art training centre campus that can respond to national health training needs, and also meet international demand. This allows the hosting of other courses by external providers which is a new source of income for the Centre, in addition to the AMO course that started in October 2005. One of the first customers is the Swiss Tropical Institute, which transferred three courses to Ifakara.

At the same time, the TTCIH has gained a semi-autonomous status and is steered by a Board of Governors which includes all relevant districts, regional, national and international players to ensure optimal coordination and collaboration. The Board is chaired by the representative of the Ministry for Health and Social Welfare, Dr. Gilbert Mliga, Director Human Resources. Vice-Chairman is Prof. Marcel Tanner, Director of the Swiss Tropical Institute. Other board members are Prof. Klaus Leisinger for the Novartis Foundation, the Regional Medical Officer, Dr. Meshack Massi, and the District Medical Officer, Dr. Woiufoo Munisi, as well as Dr. Hassan Mshinda, Director Ifakara Health Research and Development Centre, and Dr. Pascience Kibatata, Director St. Francis Designated District Hospital. Finally, the management and core competences have been strengthened through a mix of elements such as financial controlling, marketing, performance based payment system and service quality monitoring.

For more information on the Tanzanian Training Centre for International Health, please consult www.healthtrainingifakara.org