



Announcement of the appointment of the new ED

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Announcement of the appointment of the new ED

EDCTP is very pleased to announce the appointment of Prof. Charles Mgone as the new EDCTP Executive Director. Professor Mgone was formerly Head of the EDCTP Africa Office in Cape Town, a post which he took up on 2 January 2006.

Born in Tanzania, Charles Mgone has considerable experience in research and research administration. He initially trained as a clinician in Tanzania and the United Kingdom (UK), practising and teaching Paediatrics as well as conducting research. While in the UK he took a PhD in Medical and Molecular Genetics a discipline which he continued to pursue in studying various aspects of infectious diseases including measles, malaria, HIV/AIDS, chlamydia and other sexually transmitted infections. During this period he worked as the Deputy Director and later as the Acting Director of the Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research. Prof. Mgone has served as advisor at international and national levels on various matters, especially on malaria and HIV/AIDS but also on child and public health issues. He has written many papers in peer-reviewed journals and has served as the chief editor of the Papua New Guinea Medical Journal. He is the current Chief Editor of the Tanzania Paediatric Journal.

Before joining EDCTP, Prof. Mgone was Network Director of the African Malaria Network Trust (AMANET) where he was responsible for coordinating the African response to the malaria burden through accelerating the development of malaria vaccines and other interventions. In this role, he was responsible for developing and overseeing capacity development of African institutions and scientists conducting clinical trials. This included networking of the African scientific community; creation of an enabling environment through training; enhancing of ethics review and regulatory framework and the provision and management of grants.

Charles Mgone has an unwavering commitment to accelerating clinical trials and enabling strong African input to genuine partnerships with European researchers working on the poverty related diseases of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Together with his powerful vision of capacity building and networking of research centres and clinical trial sites across sub-Saharan Africa, this accords exactly with the mission and objectives of EDCTP and we are extremely fortunate to now have him in the position to take the lead in this important endeavour.

Charles Mgone is appealing to European research institutions and all Africans working in this field to join hands in the EDCTP effort to alleviate the burden of these diseases and the poverty and suffering they cause in sub-

Saharan Africa.

"African researchers have become increasingly aware of the important role they must have in tackling the diseases that so blight the African continent and its people. At the same time, many European member states have shown, through their participation in EDCTP, a genuine interest in working together through joint programmes and in partnership with their African counterparts. I call on scientists, industry, research funders and national governments in Africa and Europe to grasp this opportunity and press forward with the development of genuine ongoing partnerships which result in solid African ownership and leadership of sustainable initiatives to tackle HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB and other poverty related diseases"

Executive Director's Note

In the current issue of the newsletter, I am happy to introduce Ilona van den Brink who has joined EDCTP as the new Communications Officer. Charged with the task of disseminating information to our stakeholders, Ilona has joined us at the right moment when we are increasing the tempo of our activities. As announced in the newsletter, we are now embarking on a new strategy whereby we will be offering grants based on disease and intervention themes focusing on clinical trials as the core, and capacity development and networking as added features to ensure successful outcomes. These calls will be preceded by stakeholders' meetings that will collect ideas, suggestions and recommendations from the relevant experts and financial partners. Using this mode of operation EDCTP plans to quickly launch a series of calls and speed up conduct of the relevant clinical trials in Africa.

In this newsletter we also announce the Fourth EDCTP Annual Forum, which this year will be held in Burkina Faso in October. The forum promises to be very interesting since it will be combined with The Second EDCTP Investigators' Meeting. As the EDCTP programme matures we expect that many presentations will come from EDCTP grantees who will present and give results of their research projects. Moreover, this will also give a good opportunity for our young researchers to showcase their work.

The newsletter also bears news on the site visits to Mozambique where a number of EDCTP funded activities are taking place. We are all please to see that these activities are going on very well.

There is also news of the coming stakeholders' meeting on Nodes of Excellence and the GCP course in May in Douala, Cameroon and Banjul, Gambia. I urge those who have been selected to participate in these events not to miss the opportunity to attend and make their contributions in our fight against poverty-related diseases. For some of us who are unable to attend we will appreciate if you could give us your views particularly on Nodes of Excellence through the EDCTP blog (www.edctp.org/blog).



Professor Charles Mgone, EDCTP Executive Director

News about EDCTP Governance

The Thirteenth Developing Countries Coordination Committee (DCCC) meeting takes place in Banjul, Gambia

The Thirteenth DCCC meeting took place in Banjul, Gambia from 9 to 10 February 2007. Among issues that were discussed was a position paper on African Nodes of Excellence. These nodes will be research centres with specific expertise in different aspects for conducting clinical trials using best practices. The selected nodes will be able to use and support on a regional basis other centres with underdeveloped capacity. DCCC members agreed that regional nodes need to be built as a platform to accelerate clinical trials and capacity building in Africa. A stakeholders meeting has been convened to discuss this in Cameroon on 8 May 2007.

Other issues that were discussed in Banjul included DCCC contribution to an independent external review of EDCTP; the importance of stimulating African cofunding to the Partnership; and compilation of an inventory of clinical trial sites in Africa. The meeting was concluded with a guided tour around the facilities of the Medical Research Council who hosted the meeting. The fourteenth DCCC meeting will be in Cameroon soon after the stakeholders meeting of the 8 May 2007.

Partnership Board calls for applications for new member

The Partnership Board (PB) of EDCTP is seeking new members to develop the strategic framework of the organisation and advise on scientific and technical matters.

The PB develops the strategic framework for the research programme of EDCTP and advises the General Assembly on technical and scientific matters relating to the EDCTP programme.

The composition of the PB comprises members from both the North and from disease-endemic countries is a core element of the South-North partnership approach, which is at the basis of the EDCTP initiative.

Information on the roles of the PB, qualities requirements of candidates, appointment procedures, terms of office, remuneration policy and how to apply are provided on the website www.edctp.org.

EDCTP welcomes a new Communications Officer

EDCTP warmly welcomes Ilona van den Brink who has taken up the position of Communications Officer and will have the responsibility to improve communication tools and help EDCTP create awareness of its mission and vision.



*Ilona van den Brink, EDCTP
Communications Officer*

Coming with a solid background in the field of medicine Ilona was previously employed by the Dutch Medicines Evaluation Board (CBG-MEB). As a Communications Advisor, she produced the MEB's annual reports, had regular contacts with the media (national as well as international), and organised meetings with medical experts. She also was an MEB representative in the European working party of Communications Officers of the EU medicines regulatory agencies. Before that, Ilona worked as a market researcher for the usability of corporate websites. Ilona majored in Communications and English.

"I look forward to contributing to the visibility of EDCTP. I think this very important and dynamic project has a lot to offer to all parties involved. My aim is to be an accessible and solid partner in communicating EDCTP's vision and goals, and to tell Africa, Europe and the world about the large variety of EDCTP's initiatives and achievements. Already in my first week, I have observed that EDCTP team is a devoted, open, efficient and enthusiastic group of professionals; a team which all of us are proud of."

News about Calls and Grants

EDCTP is pleased to announce funding for the following proposals:

Clinical Trials

Identification of safe and efficacious ARV in combination with tuberculosis drugs in tuberculosis patients with HIV infections

Leif Bertilsson, Sweden: "Optimisation of tuberculosis and HIV co-treatment in Africa: Pharmacokinetic and pharmacogenetic aspects on drug-drug interactions between rifampicin and efavirenz"

Capacity building for the conduct of phase I/II and Phase III trials of vaginal microbicides against sexual transmission of HIV

Janneke van de Wijgert, The Netherlands: "Preparing for Phase III vaginal microbicide trials in Rwanda and Kenya: Preparedness studies, capacity building, and strengthening of medical referral systems"

New EDCTP strategy in calls and grants

EDCTP has recently revised its strategy for calls and grants to focus on a product based approach. The topics for these new calls will be drugs and vaccines for the three target diseases as well as microbicides. New calls will be based on projects that will contain work-packages that have clinical trials as the focus, but also include networking and capacity building as part of the trial. This is aimed not only at accelerating the development of new clinical products but also to increase the capacity in Africa for the conduct of trials. In order to realise this strategy EDCTP is currently organising a series of stakeholders' meetings. The objective of these meetings is to recommend priorities to EDCTP in terms of products in the pipeline and suitable sites in sub-Saharan Africa to conduct the trials. Participants will include funders from EDCTP Member States as well as third parties, product developers, representatives of African partner institutions and experts in the field. Most of the participants will be identified by the Organising Committee, which will comprise members of the EDCTP Secretariat, Partnership Board, Developing Countries Coordinating Committee and a representative of the country that hosts the meetings, and led by an Independent Chair.

The first stakeholder meeting on malaria vaccines was held in Copenhagen, Denmark on Wednesday January 31 2007. Under chairmanship of Dr Carter Diggs, the Senior Technical Advisor on malaria vaccine development for USAID, the 39 participants discussed potential products in the pipeline and potential suitable African sites to do clinical trials. In addition recommendations were made with respect to the EDCTP funding procedure. A full report on this meeting is available from our website.

The schedule for these meetings is as follows:

Topic	Date	Location
Malaria vaccines	31 January 2007	Copenhagen, Denmark
TB vaccines	11 April 2007	The Hague, The Netherlands
Nodes of Excellence	8 May 2007	Douala, Cameroon
HIV treatment	24 May 2007	Madrid, Spain
TB treatment	31 May 2007	Dublin, Ireland
Microbicides	8 June 2007	Oslo, Norway
Malaria treatment	14 June 2007	Vienna, Austria
Malaria in pregnancy	15 June 2007	Vienna, Austria
HIV vaccines	7 September 2007	Antwerp, Belgium

Events

Update on the Fourth EDCTP Annual Forum

The coming EDCTP Fourth Annual Forum will take place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 22-24 October 2007. The main objectives of the forum are to have an overview of on-going clinical trials on HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis in Africa and to promote networking activities. The forum will consist of keynote addresses by invited speakers, plenary sessions, breakaway sessions, group workshops and electronic short slides presentations (electronic posters).

The registration and submission of short slide presentation (electronic posters) are open to everyone interested in attending the meeting. Bursaries will be offered to those with selected presentations from African countries. To qualify for the bursaries one must register for the forum by 25 May 2007.

The Organising Committee has launched the Fourth Annual Forum portal at the EDCTP website. The portal gives information on the event, including travel, accommodation, information about Ouagadougou and Burkina Faso, the provisional programme for the event and online registration. Please access www.edctp.org/forum2007 to find out more.

Meetings and Visits

EDCTP site visits to Mozambique

Dr Pascoal Mocumbi, the EDCTP High Representative (HR); Mr. Simon Belcher, Director of Finance and Administration (DFA); and Dr Michael Makanga, Capacity Development Manager (CDM), made a site visit to Mozambique from the 26-30 March 2007. The team visited Manhica Health Research Centre, Direcção de Saude da Cidade de Maputo; José Macamo General Hospital, the Foundation for Community Development (FDC) and the National Institute of Health in Maputo.

Manhica Health Research Centre under the directorship of Dr Pedro Alonso is preparing to undertake the following EDCTP funded studies:

1. Evaluation of 4 artemisinin-based combinations for treating uncomplicated malaria in African children. This is a multicentre study with Professor Umberto D'Alessandro as the coordinating investigator. Seven countries are involved including: Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Gabon, Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia and Mozambique. Ten research sites are involved including: Nanoro (Burkina Faso) Calabar (Nigeria), Lambaréné (Gabon), Mbarara, Jinja and Tororo (Uganda), Rukara and Mashasha (Rwanda), Ndola (Zambia), Manhiça (Mozambique).



Data management unit at Manhiça Health Research Centre in Mozambique

2. Establishing HIV/AIDS microbicides clinical trial capacity in Mozambique and expanding an existing site in South Africa. Dr Sheena McCormack of the Medical Research Council, UK is the coordinating investigator while Dr Sibone Mocumbi is the Mozambican investigator for this study. The study involves collaboration between the Spanish and UK national HIV programmes, three institutions in Mozambique – the National Institute of Health (INS), the Manhiça Health Research Centre (CISM), and the Foundation for Community development (FDC) and the Reproductive Health & HIV Research Unit (RHRU) of the Wits Health Consortium (Pty) Ltd in South Africa.
3. Intensive safety monitoring of antimalarial and anti-retroviral drugs used in pregnancy in Manhiça. This is a two year career development project involving CISM and Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo and is to be carried out by Dr Esperança Sevene.
4. A capacity development networking grant. This project supports networking research activities involving Ifakara, Lambarene, Manhiça with Dr John J. Aponte as the Mozambican coordinator.

A tuberculosis clinical trial is also planned to be undertaken at the José Macamo general hospital in Maputo: A controlled clinical trial to evaluate high dose rifapentine and moxifloxacin in treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis. This is a multi-centre study involving Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Dr Amina Jindani is the coordinating investigator for this study and Dr Zulmira da Silva, the Mozambican investigator.

The EDCTP team had separate meetings with several officials including the head of delegation of the European Commission in Mozambique, Mr. Glauco Calzuola; the Minister of Science and Technology Professor Dr Eng. Venancio Simão Massingue; the Deputy Minister of Health Dra Aida Theodomira Libombo; the Director of the National Institute of Health and also chair person of the Mozambican National Ethics Committee, Dr João Manuel Carvalho Fumane; the deputy Director of the National Institute of Health Dr Ricardo Thompson; the WHO country representative resident in Mozambique, Dr El Hadi Benzerroug; WHO programme officers in-charge HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, Dr Abdou Moha, Dr M Angelica Salomão and Dr Eva de Carvalho respectively; and the head of pharmaceutical department in the ministry of health, Dr Felicidade Sebastião Sitori; and the head of drug registration department in Ministry of Health, Dr Sultana S. M. Razaco among others.

Announcements

Good Clinical Practice (GCP) Training Course

EDCTP in collaboration with the Swiss Tropical Institute is organising a GCP training workshop for different research institutions in Africa involved in EDCTP supported projects. The course will take place on the 7-11 May 2007 in Banjul, Gambia and will be conducted in English.

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