



WHO Somalia press release

22 January 2008

The Chinese Government boosts WHO's commitment to ensure provision of essential health services to Somalis

NAIROBI, KENYA – Responding to the urgent health needs and requirements of the Somali population, the World Health Organization (WHO) received a grant of 500,000 USD from the Peoples Republic of China to enhance secondary health care service provision in Somalia.

His Excellency Mr Zhang Ming, Chinese Ambassador to Kenya, and **Dr Fouad Mojallid**, WHO Representative for Somalia, signed the donor agreement on 22 January 2008, in the presence of staff from both the Chinese Embassy and WHO, and the media. Also present to witness the signing ceremony at the Chinese Embassy was the Somali Ambassador to Kenya, **H. E Mr Ali Mohamud Nur**. The fund will be used to purchase drugs, supplies and equipments to equip hospitals in South and Central Somalia, especially in areas where the health facilities have been destroyed by ongoing conflict.

In his speech, Mr Zhang Ming, Chinese Ambassador to Kenya, stressed the need to deliver quality health care to the people suffering in Somalia. "We have recently visited Banadir Hospital, which was built in the 70's by the Chinese government. The hospital was still functional, but we found many people in need of basic health care services", said Mr Zhang Ming. Dr Fouad Mojallid, WHO Representative, reiterated this point, saying "It is necessary to continue to provide for the over 1.5 million in dire need of medical assistance".

Currently in Somalia, there are very few hospitals that have the ability to provide secondary health care services. Bay Regional hospital, which acted as the only secondary level hospital in South zone of Somalia was nearly completely destroyed during the conflict of the last 17 years. In the Central zone there are a few hospitals with some higher level care, managed by international NGOs. However, to cope with the high numbers of casualties incurred by the continuous conflict and establish ongoing health care delivery to the highly populated area, it is essential to have well functioning public hospitals in every region.

WHO, with the support of partner agencies and donors, has started rehabilitation of few hospitals in Somalia. By the end of 2008, WHO aims to have rehabilitated and fully furnished at least three hospitals in South Central Somalia, in areas with little or no access to secondary health services.

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