

# MEMS NEWSLETTER

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**JUNE 2004**

**Volume 1, Issue 003**

**A forum for sharing progress on the on-going MEMS activities and other related professional matters between MEMS and Participating Health Facilities**

***(Issued by the Mission for Essential Medical Supplies - MEMS)***

*Dear reader,*

*Once again we are glad to share current issues and developments surrounding MEMS.*

### **Signing of Memorandum of Understanding**

From March to April this year, a team of MEMS staff went on a round tour to hospitals<sup>1</sup> that are expected to participate in the initial phase of MEMS project. The aim of the tour was to get the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between MEMS and Participating Health Facilities (PHFs) signed as an indication of the commitment and understanding of the PHFs to the project. The tour was successful and MEMS is very grateful that all hospitals signed the MoU.



Dr. Menerad Rwezaura of Iambi Hospital and Ulla signing the MoU at Iambi; the event was witnessed by the MEMS team.

The signing was done with individual hospitals after agreeing to the contents of the MoU and the price of drugs and supplies to be obtained from the prime vendor. This stage paved way for the next steps with higher anticipation and confidence for the project development such as committing quantities of the drug and medical supplies to the prime vendor and

preparation for the setting up communication facilities through VSAT.



William Mfuko from MSH clarifying some issues to Dr. Olsen (Dr. In-charge of Haydom Hospital) and Kari Olsen (administrator); on the right, Orgenes Lema carefully listening

During the tour, hospitals expressed their interest on the project; they also showed their concern on the slow pace of MEMS development. However since MEMS is a project that involves three parties namely; MEMS, PHFs and Prime Vendor (PV), thorough planning and common understanding in each step are very crucial in order to avoid any 'breakdowns' while the programme is on action as the consequences of rushing will be detrimental not only to the parties but also people who require services from the PHFs. In general, discussions with PHFs were very fruitful. Besides the above-mentioned issues, other issues raised include:

- Logistics of quality testing for the products from the PV;
- Cost of installing and running VSAT facility and its accessories;
- Monthly subscription fee to the communication service provider;
- Emphasis on MEMS as a one stop shop;
- Hospitals joining MEMS should not just be interested to individual price of items, instead they

<sup>1</sup> Hospitals which signed the MoU include; Haydom, Iambi, Makiungu, Machame, Marangu, Bumbuli, St. Elizabeth, Selian, Nkoaranga, Ilumbula, Endulen and Karatu.

should focus on the whole package of services and benefits to be accrued by joining the programme;

- Financial obligations by both parties: MEMS and PHFs;
- Review of service fee and distribution of surplus if ever realised. One facility suggested that the MEMS service fee could be formulated equitably taking into consideration the contribution to the MEMS programme by bigger institutions. This will be discussed at the review of the program – six months after being operational;
- Good stock control is vital for MEMS and PHFs;
- Accurate information and documentation shall be the key for good pharmacy practice.



Dr. Maria Borda of Makiungu Hospital, Singida region signing the MoU in front of Ernest Makena (Finance and Administration Manager – MEMS)

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### Computer training for PHFs

We are glad to inform you that computer training of pharmacy staff from the PHFs was organized by MEMS from May 24<sup>th</sup> to June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The training, organized in two groups for two weeks each was positively received according to the evaluation of the first batch of students.

The training, which covered basic computer skills such as MS Word, MS Excel and Internet/Email communication, will enable the trained staff to carry out their day to-day activities including stock control and electronic ordering using VSAT satellite communication to be provided by the project. The training was conducted by MEMS and experienced tutors from the Arusha based company, A&A Computers, who won the training contract on competitive basis.

Upon completion of the computer training, PHFs will receive a donation of one computer unit with all accessories. The computer units will be located in the pharmacies and will be used by hospitals' pharmacy department for their daily drug store management.

Plan is on the way that participants of the course will receive a constant help and follow up from MEMS to ensure that the knowledge gained is utilized fully to improve operations of the pharmacy. In a graduation ceremony of the first group of trainees held on Friday the 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2004; participants were urged to utilize the knowledge gained for the betterment of their hospitals and public in general.

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### Issues related to financial transaction and banking

Financial transaction is as important as other MEMS activities. MEMS will, prefer to handle most of its financial transaction through electronic channels i.e. bank transfers. In order to determine which of the banks in Arusha will offer the best package to the MEMS project, a survey was conducted on March, 2004 to six of the banks located in Arusha. The survey gathered relevant financial and banking information that would suit MEMS, PHFs and MEMS partners.

Out of the six banks surveyed, 3 banks were pre-qualified, with whom there is an ongoing negotiation with the aim of having their charges and fees streamlined further including special charges to the facilities in the MEMS Project while making transfers to the MEMS Account.

The major observation was that; several banks have a very limited network within Tanzania. One bank has branches in almost all the regions in Tanzania and would be appropriate for local transactions and transfers. Facilities will be informed on the outcome of the bank survey.

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### MEMS Office

MEMS has recently completed expansion and renovation of their office located at *Centre for Educational Development in Health, Arusha (CEDHA)*. The premise has adequate space to accommodate all staff of MEMS. Visitors to the MEMS office, which has an open office plan, have expressed their satisfaction with the setting of the office given the anticipated MEMS activities.

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### EPN/WHO workshop

From May 31 to June 2, 2004 there was a feedback workshop organised by *Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network (EPN) and Essential Drug and Medicines Policy Department (EDM), World Health Organisation (WHO)*. The workshop aimed at identifying presenting and discussing lessons learnt for the multi-country study on drug supply organisations run by Church

organizations in 11 sub-Saharan countries. Another aim of the workshop was to familiarise the network with 'access guidelines' developed by EPN.

Outputs of the meeting included development of indicators of compliance with the EPN 'access guidelines'; analysis of problems affecting Drug Supply Organizations (DSOs) and formulation of recommendations and plan of action to improve the activities of DSOs. Criteria of a well functioning DSO were established. MEMS was represented by Orgenes Lema and Mavere Tukai.

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### **ELCT Partners meeting**

Staff of MEMS participated in ELCT Managed Health Care and Managed Education Programmes Partners meeting held June 7-8, 2004. During the meeting MEMS received lots of interest from various partners and an expression of continual support and follow up on its activities.

It was pointed out that while MEMS supply operations are about to be launched, it is important also to start considering scaling up of the project. Scaling up of MEMS should consider geographical expansion as well as service expansion e.g. enrolment of new hospitals to the project located in other regions and coordination of the procurement of ARVs for church hospitals.

It was stressed that during the process of making MEMS an autonomous legal entity starts, care should be exercised to propagate and retain high moral values. Also it was suggested that MEMS shall continue to be as neutral as possible and should accommodate all not for profit health institutions.

In this meeting areas of potential partnership between MEMS and Public Sector were identified. These include:

- Partnership with the National Drug Control Laboratory of the Tanzania Food and Drug Authority and Infusion Unit Project, Moshi on quality assurance of drugs and medical supplies;
- Collaboration with Universities;
- Collaboration with MSD (e.g. for the purchase of insulin, narcotics and other restricted items).

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### **Launching of the MEMS programme**

Launching is expected in September 2004. There are several reasons for delays in launching the programme. The prime reason is the preparation for a strong base/foundation for an efficient and effective service including VSAT installation and after signing the contract, the approved vendor needs time for

mobilization to make available the drugs and medical supplies for the facilities

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### **What Next? (June to September 2004)**

<i>Signing the contract with Prime Vendor</i>
<i>Signing contract with SimbaNET for VSAT service</i>
<i>Computer training for the PHFs staff</i>
<i>Computer donation to the PHFs pharmacy department</i>
<i>Baseline study for the prime vendor project to be conducted by Healthscope</i>
<i>VSAT installation and testing at PHFs.</i>
<i>Launching of the program – facilities begin to place their orders through MEMS</i>

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