

## MUHAS, MNH and Germany to set up gastroenterology training centre

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The Gastroenterology Foundation (GF)-Munich and German Rotary in collaboration with Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Science (MUHAS), Muhimbili National Hospital (MNH) and the Ocean Road Cancer Institute has established the East Africa Gastroenterology Training Centre in Dar es Salaam for gastroenterology and digestive oncology, a project worth more than 1b/- to its completion.

Speaking during the opening workshop of the centre yesterday in Dar es Salaam, MNH Executive Director, Dr Marina Njelekela said that the goal of the centre for gastroenterology, hepatology and digestive oncology is to provide advanced and modern management of the diseases and for groundbreaking research in the field.

Njelekela said that the centre will provide doctors of internal medicine and general surgeon with the specialist knowledge required to adequately address and manage illnesses of the digestive tract.

The centre will serve the students from East and Central Africa who will be coming to Tanzania for the course but at first the centre is going to start with students from Tanzania only and later on students from other countries will be invited to join the center for training, she said.

She said that GF has contributed endoscopic equipments, learning resources materials, and international faculty, while MNH provided the space and shouldered the costs for constructing the building and furniture supplies and MUHAS provided the local faculty, development of Gastroenterology curriculum and recruiting students.

Moreover, she added that the crucial challenge facing the programme is trainers' requirements and financial resources to sustain the training and promotion of services will also need to be addressed in a strategic manner with concerted efforts.

Professor Naboth Mbembati from MUHAS who represented the Vice Chancellor during the occasion said that digestive diseases have been a huge problem to many people as there is lack of specialists in that field; there are only three specialists all over the country hence in most cases treatments of digestive diseases have been conducted by other doctors who are not specialists of digestive problems.

Prof Mbembati added that the number of people with digestive diseases is now increasing whereby in every 100 people, 8 of them have digestive diseases whereby they could stay with the disease for about 20 years without getting treatments due to poor understanding of the disease or lack of specialists for the disease.

In his part, a specialist in internal medicine, Dr Mwenesano David said that digestive oncology could lead to stomach cancer, liver cancer, and diabetes.

Dr. Mwenesano added that the center will be training experts in that field and will also play a role in curing the diseases.

Professor Rudolf Arnold from Philip University in Germany said that the center will be helpful to Tanzania because many people have been traveling overseas for treatments of gastroenterology and digestive oncology.

He called on many students in the field to be educated of these diseases so that the country can have many experts in cancers, chest diseases which usually cost individuals and the nation at large a whole lot of money.

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