



In Search of Better Health

KENYA MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, KEMRI

PRESS RELEASE

To: News Editors & Reporters

Subject: KEMRI develops a partnership program with Kenyan scientists in the diaspora to promote capacity building in local production of medical products.

Date: Friday, 8th December, 2023

NAIROBI, KENYA, in a momentous stride towards fostering international collaboration, the Kenya Medical Research institute (KEMRI) has embarked on a transformative journey by initiating partnership with the Kenyan community in the diaspora commonly referred to as Kenya Diaspora Alliance (KDA) through establishing of a formal Diaspora Engagement program set to commence in January 2024.

KEMRI is best known for disease outbreak investigations and containment and development of new tools to diagnose, prevent and treat emerging new diseases. The COVID-19 pandemic showed the critical nature of KEMRI to the country's public health emergency response needs. KEMRI's success has been attributed mainly to working with global partners who have been key in capacity building- infrastructure, equipment and human resource. Research development and innovation is global, and over time it has been witnessed that collaborations often bring in effective results in research.

The Kenya Diaspora offers a potential platform for KEMRI to anchor its global reach to effect its mandate to the people of Kenya and the region. KEMRI hence has become a key plank for the Kenya Government new policy of local manufacturing of medical products. KEMRI's new policy is research and development of new vaccines, diagnostics and drugs for local manufacturing. To be successful in this new initiative, workforce development (training) in product development and incubation is very critical.

Speaking during the 10th Annual Kenya Diaspora Homecoming Convention (KDHC-2023), on 8th December in Nairobi, KEMRI Director General and CEO Prof. Elijah Songok said the mutual benefits that would arise from the collaboration between

KEMRI and the Kenya Diaspora Alliance will yield groundbreaking results, offering the promise of improved healthcare outcomes for Kenya and the broader international community.

“The Kenya Diaspora has members working in abroad universities, research institutes and pharmaceutical companies who have great expertise and experience in drug, vaccine and diagnostic development. KEMRI wishes to partner with such members of the Kenya Diaspora Alliance. The COVID-19 epidemic taught Kenya and Africa to depend on her own. That in the event of a global pandemic emergency ‘development partners’ will first take care of their own. It is therefore key for us to join hands and work together.”

Stated Prof. Songok

Under the partnership initiative, KEMRI will partner with Kenyan Scientists in the Diaspora to advance human health research and commit to building a thriving strong skills exchange not just in Kenya but globally. The partnership will include appointment to KEMRI as visiting/Adjunct professors and Eminent scientist; the visiting Scientists/Professors will in turn co-mentor graduate (Masters, PhD, Postdoc) trainees through KEMRI to develop the critical local mass for product development. The Diaspora scientist shall also support in external fundraising activities through drawing partnership research and innovation grants from the diaspora to KEMRI. Diaspora scientists are set to facilitate partnership between their mother institutions abroad with KEMRI, and in return, KEMRI will provide the platform (labs, personnel, populations, clinical trial sites) for Kenya Diaspora scientist who wish to carry out their projects in Kenya.

This therefore marks another journey for KEMRI in advancing its commitment to carry out Research for better health the country.

For more information, please contact Wodera James on Email: jwodera@kemri.go.ke, or 0722767682 or Patronilla Goren on Email: pgoren@kemri.go.ke ,0728641515

About KEMRI

The Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) is a State Corporation established in Kenya in 1979 through the Science and Technology (Repealed) Act, Cap 250 of the Laws of Kenya operated under the Science Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 as the national body responsible for carrying out research in human health in Kenya. Currently, KEMRI operates under Legal Notice No. 35 of March 2021 KEMRI has grown from its humble beginning over 40 years ago to become a regional leader in human health research. The Institute currently ranks as one of the leading Centers of excellence in health research both in Africa as well as globally.