

Eastern Mediterranean Health Genomics and Biotechnology Network (EMHGBN) Meeting in Pasteur Institute

A three day meeting was held in Pasteur Institute of Iran. The objectives were as follows:

Calling Ad Hoc members for a meeting to follow up matters from last year's meeting and to establish basics for formulating steering committee, approve the vision, mission and strategic goals as well the Website & Logo for EMHGBN

Dr Malek Afazali the Deputy Minister for Research started the discussion and inaugurated the meeting by pinpointing the hurdles on the way for a regional network to be established.

Dr. M. Sheikh, Iran's WHO representative was also present and continued the discussion by thanking the organizing committee.

Dr. Mohammad Hassar, the head of Moroccan Pasteur Institute, was selected as chairman for the meeting.

The members agreed on the issue that the secretariat could be in Iran but the next meetings could be held in another country.

Dr. Ali Haeri mentioned that he will not be available all the time and he offer to resign and to be replaced by Dr. Sardari a scientist at Pasteur institute of Iran. This offer was unanimously passed by the members.

Dr. Ali Haeri and his replacement



The network website can be viewed through the following address. www.EMHGBN.net. The logo which was designed and put on the website by the secretariat was then discussed and agreed on. The logo is based on the countries of the EMRO area and colour selection was based on peace and harmony within the EMRO countries.

There will be a big meeting next year hosted by Iran, in which more than 200 scientists from the area will be attending in Tehran. It was agreed upon holding a satellite meeting to select the steering committee members. That meeting will be held by end of 2006 or early 2007 and called Genomics & Biotechnology

Reaching the other countries in the area, can be through network, and support from WHO EMRO area.

Presentations were given for the second day on Medical Network for Biotechnology and Iranian Molecular Medicine Network.

All the members commented that the aim is to gather all countries and get as soon as possible and as fast as possible

Another question that was raised was that who can join the network? The answer will be any body practicing in state of art researching in human genome and Biotechnology including Research & academic laboratories or Institutes. Individuals can join in as reference group through quality publications. Independent laboratories performing relevant activities and Biotechnology manufacturers, private universities and laboratories can also be members in EMHGBN.

It was considered that it is possible to ask the WR in each country to help in communicating letters, or sending letters to ministers of Health in Each country through the WHO. The secretary should be in place for at least three years.

Decision:

Formulate council members to meet every three years from all interested personnel in each country. The secretary should be from the hosting country. Currently the secretariat acting director is Dr. Sardari.

Funding:

- 1-Dr. Rouholamini Najafabadi, the head of Pasteur Institute of Iran is willing to support the secretariat.
- 2-The group also determined that the WHO is our partner and will continue financing this group and advocate.

Monday 20/02/2006

The final day of the meeting at Pasteur Institute.

At the end the vision, mission and the goals were finalized as followings:

Vision

To Create and sustain value by being recognized as a player in the International Biopharmaceutical, Genomics & Biotechnological Industry aiming at promoting health in the region, Valued by our customers & Respected by our Competitors.

Mission

Sustainable Development of Health Genomics and Biotechnology through facilitation of High quality R&D collaboration, sharing information, training and experiences, technology transfer and distribution, in order to meet common and regional health needs of Member countries, Collaboration in production training R & D, Cooperation between wealthy & poor

Goals

1-To promote regional common health objectives through R&D partnership and collaboration

2 - To facilitate capacity building in Genomics & Biotechnology through public awareness and promotion, training and educational programs.

1-To Priorities R & D in health related genomics & Biotechnology

2-To support production of specific and new products

3-To meet internationally recognized standards in health biotechnology and genomics.



The next meeting will be in Oman for two days during second half of April, or early May to avoid the examination season.

Mechanisms for funding for EMHGBN

The mechanism of funding EMHGBN, recommended by the Tehran Consultation was as below:

- 1. Member States should allocate specific funds in the biennial regular budget (JPRM planning) to support the EMHGBN.*
- 2. EMHGBN should harness funds for research and development projects through national governments and international donors and organizations within (and outside) the Region such as COMSTECH, ISESCO, IDB, GCC, TWAS, ICGEB, Global Fund etc.*

The participants of the Consultation also pointed out that while autonomy of the network was necessary, the public sector in the Region could be the major investor and stakeholder in the development of science and technology, including that of the health sector. However, it was also pointed out that private sector investment in this field is very weak in the region, and therefore there is little chance of acquiring sufficient financial support from the private sector at least for the time being. It was therefore felt necessary for scientists to interact with national governments and convince the decision-making authorities of the benefits and role of the network in supporting genomics and biotechnology development for health within countries.

- 1-Dr. Rouholamini Najafabadi is offering US \$ 15k to finance till the end of this year, while COMESTEC is meeting to help in research genomics and biotechnology, up US \$ 200k for joint projects between countries. A proposal to take US \$ 10 – 15k by a letter to be sent from the secretariat to Dr. Abdul Rub to request US \$ 10k or 5% from the research budget to support the network establishment.*

2-Self financing

Many thanks to Dr. Sardari & his team, who devoted lot of efforts towards the success of this meeting, and this is strong start which we have to carry on to build up both national and global network.