

## **Remarks from the GIZ Country Director, Mr. Stefan Opitz**

### GIZ Support to the Health Sector Programme

Stocktaking Workshop, October 2, 2018

As GIZ Country Director in Kenya, it is my pleasure to share information and reflection on 'German Technical Cooperation in Kenya: Spotlight on the Health Sector', leading over to the interactive part.

You have heard about important achievements and work in progress of the GIZ Health Sector Programme in Kenya. Let me add some context on German Development Cooperation overall, and Technical Cooperation in particular.

German Development Cooperation in Kenya, consisting of its Financial Cooperation arm, KfW, and its Technical Cooperation arm, GIZ, under the political leadership of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Developments, supports Kenyan partners in achieving jointly identified goals. Health is one of the focus areas of German Development Cooperation in Kenya, along with Agriculture, Water and, as an essential new focus area, Vocational Training/Promotion of Economic Development. Important areas of engagement also include, among others, Good Governance, Energy and Support for Refugees and Host Communities. Moreover, the GIZ-supported projects and programmes in Somalia are also managed from GIZ's Country Office in Nairobi.

For many years, German Technical Cooperation in Kenya has been almost unimaginable without a high attention to the Health Sector. Germany's engagement in the Health Sector has also been important in the concert of development partners, working together under the umbrella of Development Partners in Health Kenya (DPHK), for many years.

After a long-established cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF), a major focus on the County level has been established as of 2013 in the context of devolution.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the average life expectancy of Kenyans has increased from 53.2 to 66.7 years despite the devastating effects of the HIV epidemic. One of the important reasons for this positive development, is the drop in maternal mortality (from 759 in 100,000 live births in the year 2000 to 510 in 100,000 live births in 2015) coupled with the decrease in the average number of births per woman (from 5.2 to 3.9 within the same time span).

International development partners have considerably contributed to the decline in mortality and rise in life expectancy through their consultancy and investments. The particular strength of the German Technical Cooperation lies in how it combines local support with advice on national strategies.

In the Health Sector, in summary, it has engaged itself in promoting reproductive health and rights

including self-determined family planning, for the enhancement of, and safe access to health care through the introduction of social health insurance, as well as for better transparency and accountability of health care at the county level.

The occasion of this workshop is that the current phase (2017-2018) is coming to an end. To this point, additional funding has not been committed for the bilateral programme in the Health Sector by the German Government.

Germany has a very high level dialogue with World Health Organization (WHO) and other actors in Global Health over the last years. It has been and continues to be a significant contributor to the funding of global initiatives addressing the health-related Social Development Goals after strives had already been made towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals. The linkage between engagement in global and national efforts is a very important one, and Kenya is a driving force in Universal Health Coverage at the national, regional and global level.

At the same time, the health sector in Kenya has a particular share in a spotlight that is directed to the effectiveness of anti-corruption. While indicators drawing from people's perception and from cases coming to light are to be read with context in mind (as positive factors such as higher freedom of the press and more rigorous audits can also contribute when it comes to comparisons), Kenya's persistently poor ranking in the World Corruption Index is a matter of high concern. Such concern has coincided with the fact that it had not been possible for almost two years to obtain results of an independent audit report (which currently lies with a parliamentary committee), following indications of misappropriation of funds in the Ministry of Health, in the financial year 2015/16. Although German investments under German Development Cooperation were not affected, the German public and decision makers place high importance on transparency of the structures they are investing into. In development cooperation, there are different ways to address the risk of corruption, and to deal also with its reputational aspects. One is to help strengthen transparent processes, another can be to disengage. Such decisions are not purely technical, but ultimately political. Political decisions are outside the mandate of an implementing agency.

Whether or not the Kenyan-German Technical Cooperation Programme in the Health Sector will continue as such, it is important that the achievements and work in progress in the Health Sector, the results of many years of working together are well anchored and built upon by Kenyan institutions and their partners. Major efforts are still needed towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the provision of quality care to all Kenyans, including the poor and underprivileged, and the large group of members of the informal sector. In order to achieve UHC, one of the highest priorities under the presidency of President Uhuru Kenyatta, it will be instrumental to make good use of planning and building elements that have been developed in a dynamic interplay of Kenyan and international expertise.

Equitable access to quality health services contributes substantially to better health of individuals, families and the population as a whole. It is also a key element of social equity, and as such contributes to sustainable peace.

By commission of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), GIZ with partners also still involved at the global level in supporting UHC in partner countries. It remains to be seen if and to what extent further support for activities such as operational research and costing exercises can be supported through this mechanism. KfW, the German Financial Cooperation arm, is currently in the process of reshaping its support for UHC in Kenya, including its intended focus on health insurance coverage for members of the informal sector.

You are all aware of the importance of private sector investment in Kenya, also in the health sector. Such investments range from Kenyan hospitals and hospital groups to manufacturing of drugs and medical technology in Kenya, including of course much more. The Technical Cooperation Programme has been involved in different ways in linking private sector engagement with public interest in the health sector.

The PPP for Biomedical Engineering is attached to a project based at GIZ Headquarter. It has a National Coordinator in Kenya (Ms. Irene Omogi, from whom you have heard today), who, fortunately, will stay on even if the Kenyan-German Technical Cooperation Programme in the Health Sector should not continue beyond 2018. Hospital partnerships will also continue to be supported, to some extent, by a special funding mechanism.

Other projects that GIZ is implementing on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) with a global or regional mandate, have also been working with the Kenya Health Sector Programme in the past – not least, for example, in the area of digital health. With facilitation by the HSP, they have been able to develop contacts with partners in Kenya. My GIZ colleagues in Kenya and I will be happy to help facilitate and maintain such contacts in the future.

The health sector is one of the biggest generators of employment in Kenya. Its potential is huge to stimulate domestic economic growth also as a customer for a range of non-medical products and services, such as hospital beds, linen, laundry services, transport services etc. Experiences of the Health Sector Programme about business opportunities in these areas have started feeding into the new focal area “Promotion of Youth Employment and Vocational Training”.

This workshop is a very important milestone towards making best use for the future of what has been achieved in the past and present. (Heide Richter-Airijoki will be handing over her management responsibilities to Gabriele Wurster-Vihuto, who has kindly agreed to take over this responsibility in addition to her other tasks as Manager of the Programme ‘Support for Refugees and Host Communities’ until the end of the year).

I wish us a good interaction and '*mafanikio makubwa*' (great success).  
Asanteni sana.