

Updates from INCLEN- Africa

It is amazing how fast the year has moved since the launching of the INCLEN Trust in October 2000. Here in Africa, we continue to work hard in trying to get our house organized. In mid-February 2001, the INCLEN-Africa (IA) Council of Directors met to iron out a few remaining issues on the constitution of our network. Two full days were devoted to that exercise in Nairobi while an extra day was spent on administrative issues. The final draft of the association's constitution is now awaiting review and endorsement by the Council. The governance structure needed for the network is now clear. It was reiterated that the secretariat would remain in Nairobi until otherwise determined by the Council. IA has also established two subcommittees to give advice on training and research activities. Upon submission and ratification of their recommendations, the secretariat will be empowered to release funds for research and capacity building activities.

On April 5- 6, 2001, William Macharia (IA Secretary General and INCLEN Trust board member) represented INCLEN and IA at a "Networking for Public Health Capacity-Africa Meeting" in Pretoria, South Africa. This was a follow-up meeting to the one held at Kerala, India. University of Pretoria hosted the activity with support from the Rockefeller Foundation. Participants were from India, Vietnam, Philippines, Lebanon and several African countries, representing various organizations like public health schools or public health networks, INCLEN, SADEC (Southern Africa Development Economic Community), the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation. After a series of plenary sessions and small group discussions, the final output was the creation of a committee of representatives for different regions in Africa. University of Pretoria will continue to host the coordinator, while the Asian region will have a separate committee to liaise with the African side. The initiative recommended the formation of an alliance of networks involved in public health in developing countries so as to optimize available resources, share information and devise common strategies for better impact on public health. I am confident that INCLEN and IA are keen on getting involved in this new partnership for the improvement of public health in developing countries.

In October 2000, Makerere CEU launched a MSc course in Clinical Epidemiology while Harare CEU is in the process of starting up a distance learning course (see story below for details). These two programs are a good start towards strengthening our regional capacity building for research.

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