

# ***Memorandum of Understanding***

Between

**Ministry of Public Health**

(Islamic State of Afghanistan)

and

**The Wienbeck Foundation for Medical Development**

(Augsburg – Germany)

**Goal: Gastroenterology and Endoscopy Quality Development in Afghanistan.**

## **History and Background**

Afghanistan's health system is among the poorest in the world, due to more than twenty years of war, conflicts and political instability. The resulting health situation in Afghanistan is a direct as well as indirect threat to human well-being and security and a major economic burden on the country. For this reason with the new political set-up in the country since December 2002, the Wienbeck Foundation, which had already been active since 2001 in different countries like Haiti and Uganda, decided to work primarily in Afghanistan and started its humanitarian and professional support to Afghan people by this *Mission of Gastroenterology and Endoscopy Quality Development* in Afghanistan. The foundation was established by Professor Dr. Martin Wienbeck who was an internationally well recognized German Professor of Gastroenterology. Endoscopy has become the most important and also the most economical method to detect and treat gastrointestinal diseases such as peptic ulcer disease, esophageal and gastric cancers, colonic polyps and bleeding sources from any location in the digestive tract. Unfortunately, most of the facilities and knowledge previously existing in Afghanistan disappeared during the 23 years of war which set back many places in the country by several decades.

After that terrible tragedy by which Professor Wienbeck lost his life due to an accident on 27<sup>th</sup> of April at Kabul, the Wienbeck Foundation, all friends and colleagues of Professor Wienbeck who were supporting his project in Afghanistan are even more committed to continue their support by financial donations and by donating endoscopic equipment and other medical supply which can be used for the purposes of this MOU. Prove to that commitment is the donation of one fluoroscopy C-Band machine which has been handed to the ministry by Dr. Sediqi and one colonoscope sent by the foundation which is now in the hands of Dr. Sediqi and will be donated to one of our provincial endoscopy centers (preferably the Mazar-i-Sharif Center).

## Achievements up to date

Late Professor Wienbeck studied the present situation of Gastroenterology and Endoscopy Practice in Afghanistan. At this time there was not one female doctor able to do endoscopy for Afghan women, which is an urgent need since many women will not be ready to be examined by a male doctor. Therefore, an initial Postgraduate Course on Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Teaching and Training for female doctors at Rabia-Balkhi Hospital started in April 2003. The course was run without financial support from outside, but was only possible by the cooperation of Dr. Qamaruddin Sediqi, who is a very talented and experienced Afghan specialist in gastroenterology and endoscopy, and of Professor Dr. Martin Wienbeck who was a famous gastroenterologist and endoscopist world-wide and a retired professor from Germany. Professor Wienbeck and Dr. Sediqi closely worked together to finish the First Postgraduate Course on Gastrointestinal Endoscopy at Rabia-Balkhi Hospital. During this postgraduate course they found out that the upper GI malignancies and bleeding rank high among GI diseases in this country, and up to the present time there was no palliation or endoscopic haemostatic treatment available here. Therefore, providing at least palliation to Cancer patients and stopping the bleeding lesion by endoscopic means turned out to be of high value and was achieved by establishing the *First Therapeutic Endoscopy Center in Afghanistan* which is now at AliAbad Hospital in Kabul.

The foundation was closely supported by DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) and the German Embassy in Kabul, and received kind support by the Ministry of Public Health. The combined efforts succeeded to achieve the following goals which are of utmost importance to run and continue the mission of quality development of gastroenterology and endoscopy in Afghanistan:

- Starting modern practice of Gastroenterology and Endoscopy.
- Implementation of standards of endoscopy training and safe disinfection methods of endoscopic equipment.
- Training of female endoscopists to serve the women in need in this country.
- Establishing and equipping of the Rabia Balkhi endoscopy center.
- Providing equipment for endoscopy centers and training of endoscopists for major provinces (Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kunduz) with high knowledge and responsibility.
- Establishing the first *Therapeutic Endoscopy Center* in the country and equipping this center almost to the level of German endoscopy center.
- Providing one Color Doppler Echo Machine and first Academic Echocardiography Training course for 5 Afghan doctors (DAAD, Siemens).
- Providing modern Pathology practice in Afghanistan.

## **Objectives**

The overall objective and final goal of this MOU is to develop Gastroenterology and Endoscopy practice in Afghanistan according to international standards and providing the endoscopy facilities throughout the country, and finally to establish enough competence and services throughout the country, so that all major and most prevalent GI diseases could be treated inside Afghanistan by the Afghan physicians themselves.

The specific objective is to continue the teaching and training of Afghan doctors in Gastroenterology and Endoscopy, providing Endoscopy Facilities to other provinces, starting modern and proper practice of GI endoscopy with proper disinfection methods in the entire country.

An additional goal will be to establish several (4-5) training centers throughout the country with highly educated specialists who will each transfer the knowledge acquired in Kabul to other Afghan doctors interested to learn gastroenterology and endoscopy.

## **Available Facilities**

A very good Training Center and background which meet the requirements of modern teaching and training practices is available in the hands of Dr. Khawaja Qamruddin Sediqi, who proved to be very good teacher and trainer of endoscopy during the previous training courses of Endoscopy and has been trained additionally by Professor Wienbeck. He has received all necessary teaching CD's, books and atlases and, more importantly, the valuable experiences of late Professor Wienbeck. It is a great honour that Dr. Sediqi has been appointed as Nation Focal Point of Gastroenterology and Endoscopy by the Minister of Public Health. He also will be appointed officially to represent the Wienbeck Foundation in Afghanistan because he has received the full trust of late Professor Wienbeck and other members of his foundation during more than two years of work and cooperation with Professor Wienbeck.

## Specific steps of the Mission

According to the *Gastroenterology and Endoscopy Quality Development Mission*, after accomplishing the endoscopy training courses for doctors from the major provinces, the following steps need to be done:

### First step

- Advanced teaching and training of GI endoscopy for those who have been already trained (Ministry of Health has already agreed).
- Establishing the standards of disinfection of endoscopes to all endoscopy centers which is presently done only in a few centers at Kabul. (Initial preparation for the *National Workshop of Safe Endoscopy Procedures* has been done by Prof. Wienbeck.)
- Present Capacity of Training should be extended ( specific proposal will be presented to the Minister of Public Health)
- Further Endoscopy Training courses with maximum numbers of trainees should be started in order to fulfill the need of the Mission.
- Preliminary *therapeutic* endoscopy teaching and training for those who show good skill in diagnostic endoscopy and prove to be talented and enthusiastic in their work.
- Pathology facilities should be provided in the reach of all endoscopy centers which is an important requisite of endoscopy practice, by planning specific pathology training courses.

### Second step

- Providing complementary diagnostic modalities for Gastroenterology practice like: Manometry, PH metry, Urea Breath test etc.
- Endosonography, Double Balloon Enteroscopy, ERCP are the modern modalities in the practice of gastroenterology which need to be brought into country at least over the next 5 to 10 years.

## Requirements

It must be stated that accomplishing these steps mentioned above and getting to the final goal can not be done by the Wienbeck Foundation alone.

Each of the steps mentioned above need to be done by a joint effort of MoPH, donors, and the participation of the Wienbeck Foundation through specific projects.

For each step (project) a separate proposal needs to be presented to the MoPH by the National Focal point of Gastroenterology and Endoscopy.

The Wienbeck Foundation is committed to:

- To find the foreign professional volunteers to work with and support the Afghan Trainers.
- The foundation will try to find active second hand endoscopy equipment and other medical items from different sources which have been supporting already Prof. Wienbeck's Mission in Afghanistan.
- Some financial support when needed and proposed by Dr. Sediqi can be provided only after the approval by the Foundation's board: to provide items like disinfection solution, detergent powder, spare lamp for light source, repair of endoscopic equipment etc.

Ministry of public health is committed to:

- Support the activity of the Wienbeck Foundation in Afghanistan.
- To provide any possible official support to facilitate travel and accommodation of the members of the foundation and those professional volunteers who work for the purposes of the Gastroenterology and Endoscopy Quality Development Mission.
- Will give its best support to Dr. khawaja Qamaruddin Sediqi , who is representing the foundation in Afghanistan and is the proper person who can take care of the steps of this MOU from his position being a Focal point of Gastroenterology and Endoscopy.
- Ministry of Public Health will try its best in its relation with NGOs to get the priorities of this MOU accomplished. Finally the Foundation will give its best support to the Ministry of Public Health for the Sake of Afghan people and to fulfill the objectives of this MOU.
- Ministry of Health will support efforts to set up the necessary requirements for a specific training center in Kabul for Gastroenterology and Endoscopy . In the future, this center could be a national Gastroenterology Hospital of Afghanistan.