

**COMMEMORATION OF SEVEN YEARS OF ITS EXISTENCE**  
**SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT ON 15<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2002 (THI).**

**1 BRIEF HISTORY:**

**1.1 INTRODUCTION:**

Tanzania Heart Institute was founded and established by a Tanzanian Dr. Ferdinand Masau, a cardiovascular surgeon, when he was attending training in Cardiovascular Surgery at Texas Heart Institute under the sponsorship of the University of Texas Health Science Centre, Houston and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology of the government of Tanzania.

The institute was officially registered in the United States in 1999 and tax exempted as a non profit organization.

**1.2 ESTABLISHMENT EFFORTS:**

Establishment efforts by Dr. Ferdinand B. Masau started way back in the year 1992 when he was attending Cardiothoracic Surgery speciality training in China. He tried to persuade Muhimbili Medical Centre as his employer to establish cardiovascular Surgery department at the centre without success. Again between 1997 and 2000 he returned in the country and tried to persuade other hospitals for the same cause but received negative response from KCMC, Bugando Medical Centre, Mikocheni Mission Hospital and Tumaini Hospital. It is only TMJ hospital which responded positively and agreed to host Dr. Masau and enabled him to start the institute. But because of the challenges and government bureaucratic system he had to find his own place for the institute.

**2.0 GOALS AND AIMS/OBJECTIVES:**

Major goals for the establishment of the institute include the following:

- (i) To perform cardiovascular surgery in the country so as to save the life of our people especially for people who cannot afford to go abroad for treatment or surgery.
- (ii) To ensure that people are aware of cardiovascular surgery and can be treated at the institute.
- (iii) To educate the people about heart diseases and its infection. It is emerging as a major health problem to many people in the country.
- (iv) To ensure that the institute becomes a centre of excellence for the treatment of heart disease in Tanzania and in Africa as a whole.

**3.0 RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELATED INSTITUTES IN THE WORLD:**

**3.1 THE SOCIETY OF THORACIC SURGEON:**

The Founder of Tanzania Heart Institute Dr. Masau is a member of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons has served the Society as a member of the Workforce on International Relationships of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons from 2000 - 2008. Dr. Masau is also a founding member of the International Cardiac Surgery Outreach Program under the federation of the World Heart Foundation.

3.2 Because of his relations with different heart organizations in the world, the institute now has established relations with the following organizations:

(i) **Texas Heart Institute and Texas Children's Hospital, Medical Bridges, Inc. and Medisent International, Inc, Christian Alliance for Humanitarian Aids, Inc. Project Open Hearts etc.**

These are institutes which supplied medical equipments and supplies to Tanzania Heart Institute, trained some of our staff and some of their experts came and trained our Staff.

For more than two times medical teams of experts and Specialists came and performed heart operations to patients admitted at THI.

(ii) **German Heart Centre-Munich and German Heart Centre Voelklingen.**

Due to our effort in establishing relations with other interested parties we reached an agreement for collaboration with these institutes and concluded our agreement by having a Memorandum of Understanding between these two institutes, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and Tanzania Heart Institute.

According to the Memorandum of Understanding the two German institutes were going to assist Tanzania Heart Institute in the following areas:

- (a) To bring to the institute cardiovascular experts.
- (b) To supply to the institute medical equipments and supplies.
- (c) To train our local staff and some to get specialised training in Germany

According to the agreement the two institutes have established two organizations with the aim of soliciting funds for THI. The organizations are Heart to Heart Foundation and Heart for Tanzania. So far three hundred thousand Euros have been obtained for that purpose.

However it is very unfortunate that the Memorandum of Understanding has not been signed by the concern parties. The government Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has not agreed to sign the MOU for unknown reasons. This makes the above goals not be realized and somehow hinders the progress of the Institute

(iii) **Oxford Heart Centre and John Radcliffe Hospital.**

After their initial agreement between Prof. Steven Westaby of Oxyford Heart Center and JRH and Dr. Masau they informed the Minister of Health and Social Welfare about their interest to collaborate and wanted to involve the two governments in this cooperation. However this program failed because there was negative response from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

(iv) **The World Heart Foundation.**

Tanzania Heart Institute is a member and officially affiliated to the World Heart Foundation. Its former president Dr. Thomas Pezella visited the institute in March, 2004. He and his medical team performed heart

operations at the institute and visited officials from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare..

**(v) Muhimbili National Hospital:**

THI had an opportunity to communicate and met cardiovascular experts from Muhimbili National Hospital and discussed matters on collaboration and came up with the following recommendations.

- (a) To perform joint heart operations using THI facilities,
- (b) THI to offer practical field work to Muhimbili medical students
- (c) To offer exchange program for medical experts according to agreeable arrangements
- (d) THI to offer Theatre and ICU facilities for operations for Muhimbili.

These recommendations were resolved in December 2007 but no implementation so far.

**(vi) Collaboration with NSSF and Apollo Hospital, India .**

THI is willing to collaborate with other interested parties in the field of cardiovascular surgery and treatment. For this reason it approached NSSF which is in negotiation with Apollo Hospital for this purpose. This joint partnership was also supported by the ministry of health and ensured that these three parties meet together to discuss about the joint venture. However no communication between NSSF and Apollo Hospital and THI on the other side.

#### **4.0 ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES:**

##### **4.1 Achievements.**

**(a) Medical Equipments and Supplies:**

Since its establishment on 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2002 THI successfully managed to get medical equipments and supplies worth ten billion shillings. These equipments include: Heart Lung Machines, Transesophageal Echo machine, ECG machine, Ultrasound machine, Telemetry Receiver, Blood Gas Analyzer machine, Ventilators, Patients monitors, Anesthesia Gas machine etc. and other equipments and machines.

The institute also has obtained the catheterization unit machine which is not yet installed due to lack of experts and funds.

**(b) Treatment and Cardiovascular Surgery:**

In the period of seven years of its existence since its establishment in 2002, the institute performed more than 150 open-heart operations. Also during that period the institute examined ten thousand patients with heart problems. Out of that 2750 were admitted and 6450 were treated as outpatients. The small number of surgeries is due to the problem of affordability and lack of sponsorship from the government.

According to research done by the institute on heart disease many people in the country suffer from high blood pressure and Rheumatic Heart Disease which are the cause of heart disease because of lifestyle and poor living conditions.

© **The 5<sup>th</sup> African Heart Seminar:**

For the first time the Institute managed to host this seminar. This seminar was attended by heart specialists from Africa, America, Europe and Asia from 18<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2008.

The sponsors of the seminar were Tanzania Heart Institute, German Heart Institute Berlin, Christian Bernard Memorial Hospital (CBMH) of South Africa, and Centre for Heart Surgery, University of Erlangen, Germany.

The major purpose of the seminar was to discuss about new recent developments in heart disease treatment by using Echocardiographic, computer and surgical operations. Certainly this was a special privilege for THI. Among the participants there was also the President of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons Dr. Randolph Chitwood.

(d) **The 6<sup>th</sup> African Heart Seminar:**

This seminar will again be held at the Tanzania Heart Institute in November, 2009. THI will host this seminar for the second time. Like the 5<sup>th</sup> AHS, we expect a lot experts from Africa, Europe, America and Asia to attend the 6<sup>th</sup> AHS.

(e) **Books on Heart Disease:**

The Founder of THI who is a cardiovascular surgeon has written books on Heart Disease in Kiswahili and English. These books are going to enlighten the people of Tanzania on Heart Disease.

The books shall be soon in the market.

**5.0 Challenges facing the Institute:**

5.1 Failure to sign the above mentioned memorandum of understanding by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

This is a great setback to THI. The institute cannot fulfill its planned objectives. Due to this failure the government is still spending a lot of money by sending patients abroad instead of treating them locally.

We still request the ministry to revisit the MOU.

**5.2 Rent and Running Cost:**

The institute has a lot of equipments worth of millions of Shillings but under utilized because of lack of patients. Also running costs are high such as electricity, water and rent. The institute cannot meet these costs.

The NSSF rent stands at Tshs 900 million per annum, while THI income is very low. This can change if the ministry can revisit the MOU and NSSF to honour the lease agreement by fixing the ICU on the ground floor and to widen the lift.

**5.3 Employees Employed and Trained by the Institute.**

The institute has been sending its employees for training in the USA, but on return they normally leave the institute and join government organizations. This is a set back to staff development and efficiency.

#### **5.4 Foreign Experts.**

The institute has been recruiting foreign experts. After arrival and stay they are robbed by government institutions Bugando and Muhimbili without following established procedures and regulations. The institute plans to take legal action.

#### **6.0 Conclusion:**

Bearing in mind that heart disease is one of the major killer disease the institute has the following suggestions:

- (i) The ministry of health and social welfare should pay attention or revisit all what has been listed above.
- (ii) The institute is ready to collaborate with other interested parties as partner such as Muhimbili National Hospital, NSSF etc.
- (iii) The institute intends to provide good services to the people and request the government to bring heart patients to the institute and meet their costs instead sending them abroad for treatment.
- (iv) The institute is looking for and welcomes donations, supports and collaborations from other institutions locally and internationally.

The institute is requesting local and International organizations, donations of medical equipment, supplies and funds.

God bless THI  
God bless Tanzania  
Prepared by Tanzania Heart Institute