



**Ministry of Public Health  
Republic of Cameroon**



**COHRED**

**Council on Health Research for  
Development**

## **STRONG NATIONAL HEALTH RESEARCH SYSTEMS ENABLE SUCCESS OF HEALTH SECTOR REFORM**

### **Cameroon and COHRED work supports better evidence for the health sector and better donor alignment with national priorities**

World Health Assembly – Geneva, May 16, 2007. The importance of strong national systems in making health research more effective for improved population health has been confirmed today, with the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between Ministry of Public Health the Republic of the Cameroon and the Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED), the international non-governmental organisation.

The agreement is probably the first of its kind in the world of health research for development, as it focuses specifically on creating a long-term partnership to build and strengthen Cameroon's national system for producing and delivering health research to meet national and global health priorities.

The Cameroon strategy is driven by Dr U. Olanuena Awono, Minister of Public Health, who two years ago called for the creation of a comprehensive health research policy as a starting point for improved research coordination – between national research actors and with international development donors.

Under the Agreement, COHRED will provide advice and technical support to the government of Cameroon and its national research partners in several areas: finalising the national health research policy through a broad participative process; advice on the national health research agenda priorities as input to Cameroon's updated health sector strategy paper; and work on compiling and analysis of evidence from national research as the first step in creating a monitoring and management system for the country.

The health research strategy is one component of the broader health sector reforms led by Dr. Olanuena Awono. "Cameroon's updated health sector strategy will be aligned with specific components of the Millennium Development Goals for health, development and poverty reduction," he says.

“Our updated health sector strategy will enhance the role of health research to generate and disseminate the evidence needed for the success of the reforms. The strategy will be implemented in line with the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness that calls for the alignment of donor activities with countries’ priorities,” says Minister Olanuena Awono.

“The system building work of Cameroon is a good example for other countries. It shows how the health research system is a key component of the national health system, and contributes to the country’s overall development,” say Prof IJsselmuiden.

COHRED Director, Prof. Carel IJsselmuiden, sees Cameroon’s efforts to formally invest in the strengthening and management of its health research, as confirmation of the growing recognition that health initiatives are only truly effective over the long term if they are supported by a system dedicated to the management and improvement of the health research process.

The Cameroon research strategy calls for research – the creation of credible evidence – to be embedded in the health system in various ways. This includes the creation of research units in hospitals; managing the national health research agenda and doing research in schools of medicine that supports national priorities; management of research programmes and processes; and ensuring that research results are effectively used.

“A number of global health initiatives have recognised that they can deliver their results more effectively by working with national systems. We would like to see all global health initiatives have explicit targets to build the capacity of countries’ health and health research systems as a part of their work. When this happens, the end result will be the increased capacity of a large number of researchers and research managers across the developing world,” says Prof. IJsselmuiden.