CADD Minister meets the visiting German Health delegation

Dr. Tariq Fazal Choudhury, Minister of State, Capital Administration & Development Division, held a meeting today with the visiting German Health Mission led by Ms. Andrea Godon, Principle Manager, KFW Bank. The Mission is visiting Pakistan for the appraisal of its health projects including the Safe Blood Transfusion Project (SBTP).

The Minister appreciated the German government support for establishing the network of Regional Blood Centres and Hospital Blood Banks all over Pakistan in addition to the technical assistance for managing the new system. He said that the present Government is committed to improve blood safety standards and the development of a modern Blood Centre in Islamabad through the German support would be a very important milestone in this direction. The Minister said that in view of the significance of the Project and the German support he will request the worthy Prime Minister to be the Chief Guest for the “Ground Breaking” ceremony of the Islamabad Blood Centre. He assured the German delegation that CA&D Division will coordinate closely with Mo National Health Services to ensure timely implementation of the Phase II of the project.

The German Mission Leader appreciated the Minister for taking interest in the Blood Project and informed that in Phase II the implementation should be smoother as valuable experience has been gained in Phase I and many systems and procedures already developed. She praised the government’s commitment to the project and the cause of blood safety and welcomed the Minister’s offer to coordinate closely with the National Health Ministry as both the organizations have a key role in the Project. She also appreciated the performance of the Programme, pioneered and led by Prof. Zaheer who played a key role in the successful implementation of the Phase I by professionally managing the numerous challenges. She also stated that the Pakistan Blood Programme is widely acknowledged by the global blood community.

Earlier Prof. Zaheer, briefed the meeting participants about the project progress and the plans for the Phase II including the development of the Islamabad Blood Centre which would cater to the entire blood transfusion needs of Islamabad by providing quality assured blood components to all the hospitals in the city.

Appointment of Dr. Uzma Anjum as GIZ Technical Advisor

Dr. Uzma Anjum has been appointed as the new Technical Advisor for SBT project at the GIZ Health Sector Support Programme which is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). GIZ has been supporting the Programme since its conceptual phase and played a vital role in the successful implementation of the Phase I. Dr. Uzma is well familiar with the Project and has remained part of the GIZ-GFA Technical Cooperation Team for the project during 2012-15.
The 34th International Congress of the International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT) was organized in Dubai from September 3-8, 2016. The programme included plenary and parallel sessions with invited speakers and selected oral presentations on state of the art topics in the field of transfusion medicine. The Congress also provided networking opportunities for experts and industry. More than 2,000 delegates from 90 countries attended the Congress. About 50 participants from Pakistan attended the ISBT Dubai including the National Coordinator SBTP, Prof. H.A. Zaheer, SBTP team and representatives of public and private sector blood establishments.

**Presentations**
The SBTP team presented 9 posters in the Congress. The topics covered various aspects of transfusion medicine including, policy development, clinical transfusion chain, immuno-haematology and molecular biology.

- Iron Deficiency and Iron Deficiency Anaemia in Blood Donors at a Tertiary Care Hospital in Islamabad, Pakistan
- Red Blood Cells Phenotyping of Blood Donors in Islamabad, Pakistan
- Detection of HBsAg Mutants in the Blood Donor Population in Islamabad, Pakistan
- Implementation of Donor Haemovigilance System in Islamabad, Pakistan
- Analysis of Blood Donor Deferral Patterns in Islamabad, Pakistan
- Incidence of Adverse Transfusion Reactions in Multi-transfused Thalassaemia Patients in Murap, Azad Jammu Kashmir, Pakistan
- Epidemiology of Transfusion Transmitted Infection and Blood Groups among Patients with β-Thalassaemia Major in Pakistan: A Cross-sectional Study
- Establishment of PakBLOOD: An Association of Blood Transfusion Stakeholders in Pakistan
- Cost Calculation and Payment Models in Blood Transfusion Service, Pakistan
Pakistan delegation participated in the working party meetings of the Ethics Committee, Quality Management, Global Blood Safety and the National Societies which provided an opportunity to interact with regional and international experts and make country contribution. The SBTP team also actively participated in the pre-conference workshops on inspection of blood establishments, peer-reviewing scientific manuscripts, and clinical transfusion practice.

**DiaSorin Scientific Workshop**

The DiaSorin Scientific Workshop “New insights of Hepatitis B and C Serology” was held on September 5, 2016. The workshop was chaired by Prof. Hasan A. Zaheer, National Coordinator, SBTP. The well attended workshop included plenary lectures from international experts; Prof. Mohamed Abdel-Hamid (Egypt), Dr. Ana Avellón Calvo (Spain), Dr. Russell Cable (South Africa) and Dr. Charlotte Pistorius (South Africa).

**Meetings with Industry Partners**

The SBTP team held meetings with industry partners and briefed them on the recent developments in the Programme including the signing of Phase II of the project. The industry partners assured full support and appreciated the commitment of the Pakistan government and Programme leadership for successfully implementing the reforms in a challenging environment.

**Visit to Dubai Blood Centre**

The SBTP team visited the Dubai Blood Donation Centre, Dubai Health Authority, Government of Dubai which is a state of the art blood centre certified with ISO and AABB.
Mr. Irfan Shabber Kayani, SBTP, was selected for the "I TRY IT" programme of the TTI Working Part of ISBT. It is a training course and intends to refine research readiness and provide an overview of key skills that will advance research ability for young investigators. The selected candidates participated in pre-conference eight webinar lectures from experts. During the conference, one to one mentoring sessions were conducted and training on peer review was given. The ISBT will award a maximum three grants of €5,000 each to the best protocols among those who submit final protocols.

The ISBT awarded Fellowship Awards to two Pakistani participants (Dr. Ayesha Majeed Memon and Dr. Imran Ahmad Siddiqui) from Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi. The Fellowship is awarded to young transfusionists from developing countries in recognition of their research work.

Young Investigator Breakfast Session is especially organized for the scientific and medical researchers (under 35 years) to discuss their work with their peers and an expert mentor. Young investigators from Pakistan delegation participated and shared their research experiences and ideas with the experts in the field and received valuable feedback.

ANNOUNCEMENT

International Plasma Fractionation Association (IPFA) 2017 Meetings

IPFA 2nd Asia Workshop on Plasma Quality and Supply, “Technological, regulatory and organizational tools to produce plasma for fractionation” | 2 - 3 March 2017 | Yogyakarta, Indonesia

IPFA/PEI 24th International Workshop on "Surveillance and Screening of Blood-borne Pathogens" | 16 - 17 May 2017 | Zagreb, Croatia

IPFA/BCA 3rd Global Symposium on The Future for Blood and Plasma Donations | 11 - 12 September 2017 | Atlanta, GA, USA