



In Search of Better Health

Press Release

Shelter Afrique Foundation Donates KES. 1 Million Shillings to the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) for the Production of Covid-19 Testing Kits.

Nairobi: April, 30th, 2020: – Pan-African housing development financier Shelter Afrique through its foundation, the Shelter Afrique Foundation, has donated KES 1 million shillings to KEMRI to help the institute boost its testing capacity in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The foundation’s intervention comes after many countries have struggled to boost their testing capacity for the novel Coronavirus.

Speaking at the handover ceremony at the Shelter Afrique headquarters in Nairobi, Managing Director, Andrew Chimphondah noted the growing relationship between the two organisations, *“Ordinarily it would be odd to note a relationship between a medical research institution and a housing financier, on the surface there is very little to register between biochemists, epidemiologists and architects, accountants and quantity surveyors. But these are not ordinary times, these are urgent times and we, like many others find ourselves bound to society at large”*

He continued *“I would like to begin by thanking the KEMRI and indeed all scientific staff for the active role in the fight against Coronavirus. I would also want to commend the Government of Kenya for the way they have managed the pandemic. These are urgent times, this has been our guiding philosophy over the last few weeks and urgent times calls for society to pull together. We have been looking for a way to play a part and we have realized that any successful strategy starts with testing; we are making this gesture today to support KEMRI’s capacity to test”*.

The donation was received by the Chairman of the KEMRI Board of Management, Dr. Naphtali Agata and Director General, KEMRI, Prof. Yeri Kombe.

Receiving the donation, Dr. Agata thanked the Shelter Afrique for their generous contribution, saying it would immensely boost the research in the development of diagnostic kits in particular, the Point of Contact Rapid Test (PoCT) kit which KEMRI is undertaking as part of their response to Covid-19 pandemic.

Dr. Agata pointed out that the Institute is not new to dealing with various pandemics and epidemics. Way back in 2002 the Institute was involved in the detection for the first Corona virus pandemic and continued to study the characteristics and key features with an aim of better understanding the Corona Virus.

His views were shared by Prof. Kombe who said that the considerable experience has been utilized during the current COVID-19 pandemic to respond appropriately as an Institute including the development of the PoCT kits.

“This generous donation from our friends Shelter Afrique has come at a time when KEMRI is actively involved in the development of various diagnostics, vaccine and molecular techniques that are geared towards the fight against Covid-19 in Kenya...This generous contribution will greatly boost these efforts” Prof. Kombe said.

Among the various products that KEMRI is developing against Covid-19 include; The Whole Genome Sequencing, virus transport media, Rapid Test kits, drug development and production of alcohol based hand sanitizers.

Dr. Agata and Prof. Kombe were accompanied by the Director in charge of Corporate Services, Mr. Kamau Mugenda, COVID-19 trainers and research scientists, Prof. Wallace Bulimo, Nicholas Mwikwabe and Milka Muthoni and Deputy Director in charge Corporate Communications, Mr. Davis Mkoji

“For us this is a double blessing! when we have just been nominated by the Africa CDC as a Centre of Excellence for Evaluation of Covid-19 diagnostic to establish a continental capacity to facilitate systematic appraisal of SARS-2 diagnostic-tests. *This will also ensure timely and accurate testing which is critical for effective response, for Several SARS-2 diagnostic tests*” said Prof. Kombe.

The engagement with KEMRI comes in a wake where the Shelter Afrique Foundation has provided relief materials to over 4000 beneficiaries across Africa; the relief package includes dry goods, detergents, and other staple foodstuffs. The Shelter Afrique Foundation supports Shelter Afrique’s advocacy and research work, created in 2016 the foundation had an initial endowment of USD 1.7 million dollars and receives an agreed percentage from the Company’s profits. While active in advocacy and research, these activities mark the first Corporate Social Responsibility of the organization that targets low-income beneficiaries.

Shelter Afrique has vowed to continue to find ways to support member countries during the crisis and is mainly concerned with how the crisis will impact affordable housing in member countries. The Centre of Excellence, a unit of the organization dedicated to research and funded by the foundation has begun anticipating the many ways the pandemic will reshape affordable housing in Africa.

Notes to editor:

About Shelter Afrique

Shelter-Afrique is a pan African housing finance and development institution established by African governments to address the need for sustainable housing delivery system and related infrastructure projects in Africa. Shareholders include 44 African countries, the African Development Bank, and the African Re-Insurance Corporation. The company’s mandate is to provide financing by way of debt, quasi-equity and equity to both public and private institutions for housing and urban infrastructure projects in its member countries. Shelter Afrique builds strategic partnerships and offers a host of products and related services to support the efficient delivery of affordable housing and commercial real estate. These include project finance, institutional lending, equity investments & joint ventures, trade finance, and social housing. We also offer practical advice and technical assistance to a wide range of industry stakeholders. <http://www.shelterafrique.org/>; [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#)

About KEMRI

The Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI): is a state corporation established through the Science and Technology (Amendment) Act of 1979,

as the national body responsible for carrying out health research in Kenya. Since its inception, 40 years ago, KEMRI has developed a critical mass of scientists and technical personnel, to enable it mount a competitive research infrastructure to rank as a leading centre of excellence in health research both in Africa as well as globally. Recently was nominated as at the top research institution in Africa in terms of research output by Scimago and Elsevier world ranking companies. KEMRI is currently testing for Covid-19 utilizing its wide network of laboratory infrastructure in Busia, Kisumu, Kericho and Kilifi that have highly automated equipment. <http://www.kemri.org>.

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