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EXXONMOBIL BOOSTS BIOMEDICAL TECHNICIANS

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ExxonMobil boosts Biomedical Technicians
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ExxonMobil Foundation, through its arm Africa Health Initiative, has supported training of Biomedical Technicians from Africa including Nigeria to the MediSend International Biomedical Repair Training Course (BMT).

MediSend, an international Non-governmental organisation based in United States, specialises in international healthcare delivery designed specifically to meet the needs and challenges of hospitals in developing countries.

In a statement by Mrs Gloria Essien-Danner, Executive Director, Mobil Producing Nigeria, between 2007 and 2009, ExxonMobil Foundation has funded the training of 18 medical technicians from Nigeria. The training runs for 6 months in the United States.

ExxonMobil Foundation also donated MediSend Mobile Biomedical Equipment Test and Repair kit to four hospitals in the country. The beneficiaries are the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, (LUTH), University College Hospital, Ibadan, University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Enugu, National Hospital, Abuja and Orile-Agege General Hospital, Lagos.

“The MediSend Mobile Biomedical Equipment Test and Repair kit is the largest and most comprehensive mobile unit of its kind. Each of the kits contains over 4,000 laboratory repair tools, supply items and state-of-the-art test and calibration devices,” Essien-Danner explained. “As you may be aware, a formal donation of eight of the 12 Biomedical kits took place in 2007 at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Akwa Ibom. The donations were made to University of Calabar Teaching Hospital, University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Immanuel Hospital, Eket and General Hospital, Ikot-Abasi.”

According to her, “We are proud to be associated with MediSend International. ExxonMobil affiliates in Nigeria have been involved with MediSend International since 2007, when the first Nigerians were selected for the training programme.

“Before then our initial collaborated with MediSend was through the donation of medical supplies of Immanuel Hospital, Eket.

“And 2 years after that initial effort, here we are with – a growing network of trained biomedical technicians. At the last count, 5 Nigerians are currently in Dallas, Texas, US.

“We want to believe that MediSend’s training programme has been helpful to the technicians and the hospitals. We hope the technicians found the experience rewarding and will make the most of this opportunity to improve medical services in our country.

“Given the success of the training programme, ExxonMobil Foundation decided to extend its support to the hospitals with the biomedical repair and test kits. The kits will help the hospital in repairs and maintenance of equipment – it is an aspect of our development that we need in Nigeria.

“The support to MediSend is an important piece of ExxonMobil Foundation’s Africa Health Initiative (AHI). The initiative commenced in 2000 to assist in the prevention of malaria. As we are all aware, malaria is a devastating disease which kills more than a million people every year, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa. By funding local community programmes, scientific research and global advocacy, we know we can help save lives. This initiative is continuing and going from strength to strength.

As of 2009, ExxonMobil Foundation has spent more than \$50 million to help fund programmes to fight malaria in 16 different African countries including Nigeria. This makes ExxonMobil the largest non-pharmaceutical corporate donor to malaria research and development efforts and the largest corporate donor to the U.S. government’s President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI).

In Akwa Ibom, we are implementing 2 projects under the AHI. The projects are as follows: the Malaria in Pregnancy Project with JHPIEGO, the Akwa Ibom State Emergency Blood Relief Plan with Safe Blood Africa Foundation. The JHPIEGO project is developing models for the implementation of Malaria in Pregnancy (MIP) prevention and treatment. The intervention is in 4 local government areas.

The approach is to improve the quality of antenatal care through increased access of MIP control services at the grassroots level. About 14,000 pregnant women have been provided with services – intermittent prevention treatment of malaria in pregnancy. The Safe Blood Africa project is designed to provide emergency relief blood testing and blood service development in order to increase supply of screened blood and combat the disaster of Malaria and other blood transmittable diseases in Akwa Ibom State and its environs.

“At the national level, we have nets for life in partnership with Coca-Cola Africa Foundation and Standard Chartered Bank. This project distributes free long lasting Insecticide treated nets – LLITNs – in various parts of the country. There is the ExxonMobil Blood Bank Training Programme in Abuja also stewarded through Safe Blood for Africa Foundation. It commenced in 2004 and has trained over 2,000 healthcare professionals in the various crucial components of blood safety.

“Late 2008, ExxonMobil Foundation sponsored 20 Nigerian doctors to the Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI), Uganda. The team is currently applying the skills and knowledge gained from the IDI training to develop similar training for the West African region.

“The other project is the Operation Stop Cervical Cancer Project which is helping Nigeria set up a successful cervical screening programme.

In his speech, Dr Dominic Ekpong, Group Medical Director and Country Manager, Medicine and Occupational Health, ExxonMobile said, “We look forward to continuing to work together with MediSend International to assist transform the lives of people and medical services in our areas of operation.”