

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Message from

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to the

**REGIONAL INTERCOUNTRY WORKSHOP ON QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN HEALTH LABORATORIES**

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Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you here today. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to the Government of Oman for hosting this workshop and to His Excellency the Minister of Health for inaugurating it.

Laboratory medicine professionals are confronted with tremendous ongoing change in the management and practice of health care. Such change can only be dealt with through the application of the concept of total quality management, of which

quality assurance represents the core, and by defining essential criteria for quality systems.

Health laboratory professionals have a role to play in the continuous systemic improvement of quality of health services. This can only be achieved through maintaining systems for planning, implementation and evaluation of services, as well as continuous monitoring of the quality of the services, using well defined standards and indicators, aiming at a continuous improvement.

The overall goal of quality assurance is the use of available resources to improve the quality of health care. The implementation of total quality management aims at prevention rather than correction of errors. It also prevents overutilization or underutilization of available resources, and ensures that higher quality services are efficiently delivered at the right place and at the right time to meet the needs of the patients and the community at large.

Attainment of the goal of national quality should start with achievable aims based on available resources, professional judgement, and interaction and dialogue with laboratory users and responsible managers. It should be emphasized that an important factor in facilitating the implementation of quality assurance programmes is the establishment of a strong working relationship within the laboratory medicine profession and among all professions contributing to health care delivery.

In your regional plans formulated in July 1992, May 1996 and May 1997, you established, within defined target dates, goals and targets for establishing and upgrading national quality systems covering all health laboratory services, with development of quality manuals at the level of each individual laboratory and establishment of national policies for quality assurance and quality systems in health laboratories.

In previous meetings and workshops we have already emphasized the importance of staff training, continuing education, motivation, involvement and teamwork. The sixteen countries of the Region which committed themselves to the

establishment and upgrading of national quality assurance programmes in laboratory medicine are at different phases of implementation of the plans of action agreed upon. However, we need to consider better mechanisms to enhance implementation in order to achieve our targets.

I look forward to the outcome of this workshop, hoping that by the end of the workshop you will have agreed on a revised plan of action based on your experience with previous plans of action and achievements and will have come up with improved mechanisms to enhance implementation within a reasonable time-frame.

Before concluding, I wish once again to express my sincere thanks to the Government of Oman for the excellent facilities made available to us, and I wish you all every success in your endeavours.

Thank you very much for your attention, and may God Almighty bless you.