



MOGADISHU, 18 March 2022 – On 17 March 2022, Dr Mamunur Rahman Malik, the World Health Organization (WHO) Representative and Head of Mission to Somalia, handed over a duplex pressure swing adsorption (PSA) oxygen plant to H.E. Fawziya Abikar Nur, the Minister of Health of Somalia, alongside H.E. Tiina Intelmann, European Union (EU) Ambassador to Somalia and Mr Adam Abdelmoula, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (DSRSG/UNRC/HC) for Somalia. This milestone event took place at the De Martino Hospital in Mogadishu where the oxygen plant is currently installed. The De Martino Hospital is a specialized hospital serving the capital city and Banadir, the most populated region in Somalia.

WHO handed over the PSA plant to the Federal Government of Somalia at a small ceremony. The plant was procured with generous funds received from the EU Delegation to Somalia through its ongoing support for the emergency response to COVID-19 in the country. The PSA oxygen plant inaugurated today was the first of its kind to be procured and installed at the De Martino Hospital as part of WHO's vision to build an inclusive and equitable health system post-COVID-19, together, with its partners and Ministry of Health and Human Services.

“We are very grateful to WHO and the EU Delegation for the support they have offered to Somalia for this medical oxygen. The PSA oxygen plant they have provided is placed in our national specialized hospital for COVID-19 patients, the De Martino Hospital and can serve up to 25 intensive care patients facing dire health challenges at once, while another unit refills cylinders. Together, they can fill 100 40-litre oxygen cylinders in a day,” said H.E. Fawziya Abikar Nur, the Federal Minister of Health and Human Services in Somalia. “This support is part of a strategic roadmap to boost oxygen supply in hospitals across the country.”

“Simple medical oxygen is effective in treating many health challenges – including COVID-19 and surgical, emergency and critical care services, such as trauma. In 2018, pneumonia was estimated to kill around two children aged under five every hour in Somalia and yet global evidence shows that simple medical oxygen can reduce up to 35% of child deaths. It is so crucial and yet has no substitute,” said Dr Mamunur Rahman Malik. “After noting its scarcity in Somalia during the COVID-19 pandemic, WHO mounted a speedy response, and provided medical oxygen as a smart, cost-effective investment to save more lives. In the coming months, WHO will continue to work to procure more medical oxygen to Somalia to bridge the gap in access.”

Mr Adam Abdelmoula said, “WHO is using a two-pronged approach to offering medical oxygen – while offering medical oxygen to health facilities and the Government, they are also training health care workers, biomedical engineers and technicians in using the installed oxygen plants,

with support from the EU and other partners. These steps are essential in improving a health system and advancing towards health-related Sustainable Development Goals.”

The EU Ambassador, Tiina Intelmann, highlighted that this support to the Government through WHO is an important part of the EU-funded COVID-19 response work in Somalia. This oxygen plant installed at De Martino Hospital is the first one of such devices funded by the EU, with the two additional ones currently under deployment in Garowe and Hargeisa. The EU Ambassador explained that the EU support aimed at suppressing COVID-19 in Somalia, which initially started with humanitarian aid, was continued through a partnership with WHO and the Federal Ministry of Health in order to further support the strengthening of the health sector. EU support is not only focused on critical oxygen provision but also includes a vaccination campaign through the COVAX initiative.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Somalia in March 2020, none of the public sector hospitals had medical oxygen available and the health workforce was not trained on its use. Since then, WHO has worked with partners to procure, install and deliver PSA oxygen plants for large specialized hospitals, solar-powered medical oxygen systems for small hospitals and oxygen concentrators for primary health centres to ensure high-grade medical oxygen is available at points of care for every patient struggling to breathe.



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