PRESS RELEASE

A NEW INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) ASSOCIATION ESTABLISHED IN SUPPORT OF THE WHO HEALTH ACADEMY PROJECT

Banjul, 01 March 2012: The WHO Health Academy Project, which is being jointly implemented by the WHO Country Office and the Ministries of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) and Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) with financial and technical support from WHO-HQ, is gradually gaining ground as a viable health promotion tool in the Gambia.

If health promotion is about creating supportive and sustainable environments for health action is anything to go by, the WHO Health Academy Project has proven to be working in that direction.

Barely a month after the completion of the second phase of the project, a new association - Gambia Information and Communication Technology Teachers’ Association (GAMICTTA) – has been established to continue the momentum already gained in promoting health in schools through ICT.

GAMICTTA has the blessing of MoBSE with which it has signed a memorandum of understanding to promote ICT and the Health Academy Project in all the senior secondary (high) schools. In a recent communication to the WHO Office,

GAMICTTA recognizes the importance of the health academy project and health in general as central to effective learning. “Without good health for both students and staff in schools, there will be no effective learning. With good health, students, teachers and communities at large can develop the nation”, the communication concludes.

In partnership with the WHO, MoBSE and MoHSW, GAMICTTA plans to pursue the following areas of interest:
1) To continue to advocate for and support the expansion of WHO Health Academy Project to other schools
2) To strive for the inclusion of the Health Academy Project in the ICT syllabus in Gambian schools
3) To sensitize the Parent-Teacher-Association of the schools on the health academy project
4) To sensitize food vendors in schools and the local communities on the “Safer Food Better Health” module

It must be noted that the establishment of GAMCITTA as an advocacy group for the promotion of ICT and the health academy project in Gambian schools is in line with the new socio-economic development policy of the Government of the Gambia, which is commonly known as the Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE). PAGE, among other things, recognizes ICT as one of the fastest growing and most important sectors of the Gambian economy.