

TB ALLIANCE RECEIVES \$14 MILLION FROM EUROPEAN NATIONS TO SUPPORT SEARCH FOR NEW TUBERCULOSIS CURE

Three Grants Announced at Columbia University Symposium Tracking Progress in Battle Against Disease Infecting One-Third of the World

NEW YORK CITY (March 7, 2006) – The Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance) today announced that it has received a total of \$14 million (€11.65 million) from the British, Dutch and Irish governments to accelerate development of new drugs to treat a disease that kills two million people every year.

Dr. Maria C. Freire, CEO and President of the TB Alliance, announced the grants in a speech at an international symposium of global health experts gathered at Columbia University to review progress toward the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of halting and reversing the incidence of tuberculosis (TB). The conference was co-hosted by The Earth Institute at Columbia University and The TB Alliance.

“This investment moves us another step closer to putting new, better, affordable TB drugs in the hands of the poor. For millions of people around the globe, our work will mean the difference between life and death,” Freire said.

The British Department of International Development committed £6.5 million (\$11.3 million), in its first grant to the TB Alliance. The Netherlands’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided an additional grant of €2 million (\$2.4 million), while Irish Aid provided €300,000 Euros (\$360,512). The new funding will support the overall operations of the TB Alliance, including drug discovery and preclinical development; ongoing and new clinical trials; outreach and policy activities; and innovative approaches to further streamline drug development and testing.

“Nobody needs to die of TB, yet someone does every 15 seconds so we desperately need better treatments and newer drugs,” said Gareth Thomas, Britain’s International Development Minister, in announcing the grant. “The TB Alliance is making great strides by developing a new package of drugs that could help overcome the epidemic. It’s time for other nations to make similar financial commitments to this global health priority.”

Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Director of The Earth Institute and the United Nations Millennium Project, noted the profound importance of finding new TB treatments: “With a public health threat as pervasive as TB, every government must do its part. We cannot make excuses anymore. The TB Alliance has shown that we have the science and the know-how to improve treatment. Now, it’s up to the global community to help put new cures into the hands of patients.”

Dr. Freire reminded the international audience that prior to the creation of the TB Alliance in 2000, the pipeline of TB drugs had been empty for several decades. “Now, in less than five years,” she said, “there are multiple new drugs in clinical trials.”

“We are most grateful for the new funding from the British and Irish governments and encouraged by the continued support from the Dutch government. As we approach this year’s G8 summit, we hope others make similar commitments. Together, we will realize our common goal of reversing the tide of TB.”

In the current treatment regimen, TB patients take multiple pills each day and during the first, intensive phase of treatment must be monitored daily by healthcare workers. This standard of care is available to less than half of those suffering the most infectious cases and the complexity, duration and cost of treatment hinders TB control.

Shortening and simplifying treatment for TB would save lives and bring significant economic benefits to many parts of the world, especially to the poorest and least developed nations. Between 2000 and 2020, experts estimate that nearly one billion people will be infected by TB, 200 million will become sick and 35 million will die – and the rates of infection are increasing. Many of those infected with TB are in their peak years of economic productivity.

The symposium, “Reversing the Tide; The End of Tuberculosis,” featured Professor Sachs, Dr. Mario Raviglione, Director of WHO’s Stop TB Department; Dr. Roberto Tapia Conyer, Mexico’s Vice Minister of Health; Dr. Giorgio Roscigno, CEO, Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND); Dr. Jerald C. Sadoff, President & CEO, Aeras Global TB Vaccine Foundation; Dr. Lydia Mungherera, Uganda’s AIDS Support Organization (TASO); and, Dr. Martin Springsklee, Vice President, Global Clinical Development, Therapy Area Anti-Infectives, Bayer Healthcare AG Pharmaceuticals.

Dr. Thomas Frieden, Commissioner of Health for the City of New York, spoke to the luncheon about multi-drug resistant forms of the disease and New York’s experience with outbreaks of TB. TB remains the leading killer of people with HIV/AIDS and multi-drug resistant forms of the disease are a growing threat to both the developing and developed world. San Francisco, Boston and New York City all have confronted recent outbreaks of TB. NYC’s TB outbreak in the 1990s carried a \$1 billion price tag, and new cases of MDR TB were reported in the Bronx as recently as last year.

World attention and billions of dollars are necessary to bring TB under control and eradicating it from the planet by mid-century, according to a recent plan issued by the Stop TB Partnership. The symposium tracked progress being made, revolutionary changes in the creation of drugs, diagnostics and vaccines, the role of institutions like World Health Organization, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and pharmaceutical firms and day-to-day action on the ground in the developing world.

About the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development

The Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance) is a not-for-profit, public-private partnership accelerating the discovery and/or development of affordable, new anti-TB drugs that will shorten treatment, be effective against multi-drug resistant strains, treat HIV-TB co-infection, and improve treatment of latent infection. Working with public and private research laboratories worldwide, it is leading the development of the first, most comprehensive portfolio of TB drug candidates in three decades. It operates with the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) and Irish Aid. For more information on TB drug development and the TB Alliance, please visit www.tballiance.org.

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