

**EMBARGOED UNTIL MAY 24, 2006 5 PM New York, 10 PM London**

## **Gates Foundation Commits \$104 Million to TB Alliance to Develop Faster Cure for Tuberculosis**

**New TB Drugs Urgently Needed to Replace Treatment from the 1960s**

**Second Gates Grant To TB Alliance Quadruples Initial Support**

**NEW YORK (May 25, 2006)** – The Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance) announced today that it is receiving \$104 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to advance a pipeline of new TB drugs over the next five years in the global pursuit to find a faster and more effective cure for tuberculosis.

Since its formation in 2000, the non-profit TB Alliance has built the largest pipeline in history of potential new drugs for the treatment and cure of tuberculosis, a disease that kills someone every fifteen seconds.

“Tuberculosis is one of the world’s oldest infectious agents and has always posed challenges for the scientific community. But now, we have the technology and the know-how to find a faster, simpler cure,” said Peter Small, M.D., Senior Program Officer at the Gates Foundation. “New treatments could free patients from a grueling six-month regimen and, ultimately, save millions of lives.”

The four standard drugs used to treat tuberculosis are more than 40 years old and take at least six months to work effectively. When the long treatment is not completed or drug supply is interrupted, multi-drug resistant forms of TB can emerge. In addition, TB is a leading killer of people living with HIV/AIDS, but current TB treatment cannot easily be combined with the anti-retrovirals used to treat HIV.

“We are very grateful for this support that quadruples the initial funding the Gates Foundation provided to the TB Alliance and allows us to build on the enormous progress we have made toward shortening TB treatment,” said Maria C. Freire, Ph.D., CEO and President, TB Alliance. “A package of powerful new drugs will mean we can treat more people better -- including those co-infected with HIV and those suffering multi-drug resistant forms of the disease. It will be an historic milestone, and one we can achieve.”

Despite several regional successes in TB control, the best standard of care, called Directly Observed Treatment Short-course (DOTS), reaches less than half of the most infectious cases of TB.

### **New Grant to Help Advance Promising Drugs**

In just five years, the TB Alliance has built a pipeline of 11 new drug candidates. The most advanced drug candidate, moxifloxacin, is in Phase II trials and based on preclinical findings, could help shorten TB treatment duration by at least one-third. Through a unique partnership with Bayer HealthCare AG, the TB Alliance is testing this broad-spectrum antibiotic for its effectiveness in treating TB, with a commitment from Bayer to price the drug affordably in developing countries where patients need it most.

The Gates Foundation grant will allow the TB Alliance to:

- Advance moxifloxacin into Phase III trials, with the goal of demonstrating its effectiveness for TB by 2010
- Pursue nine pre-clinical projects and identify the best of these compounds for clinical studies
- Work with policymakers, TB treatment providers and advocates to ensure that new TB drugs will be adopted and made accessible in developing countries.
- Analyze drug market conditions and compliance issues to ensure the rapid adoption of a new drug regimen once it is shown to be effective.

The grant will also support the TB Alliance as it evaluates a way to streamline the clinical trial process by testing new drugs in combinations earlier in the development process. This innovative approach could significantly shorten the time required to develop a new regimen of TB drugs.

Today, it takes an average of 130 doses to cure TB. The long-term goal of the TB Alliance is to develop a new regimen that replaces all four current drugs and could be effective in as few as 10 doses. Public health experts agree that a faster-acting TB cure would improve compliance, lower relapse rates, and reduce health care costs by limiting the time required to monitor patients. Health care costs could be reduced by 65 percent and free health workers to identify and diagnose more cases.

### **Call for Matching Funds from Governments**

“It’s a global disease and it requires a global response. Leaders meeting at the G-8 in July have an historic opportunity to fill the funding gap and ensure that we achieve one of the great global health victories of our generation,” said Dr. Freire, CEO and President, TB Alliance.

The TB Alliance estimates it will need \$100 million, in addition to the grant announced today, in order to advance the existing pipeline of 11 drugs. Since its inception, the TB Alliance has received funding commitments totaling more than \$170 million, including \$15.5 million from the Rockefeller Foundation, and a combined total of \$26.6 million from the governments of Great Britain, the United States, the Netherlands, and Ireland.

### **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 & 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](http://www.tballiance.org).

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