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USAID Awards Global Alliance for TB Drug Development \$8 Million Grant

New York and Washington, DC – October 5, 2004 – The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) announced today an \$8 million grant to the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance) for research and development into new drugs to save lives and combat the rapid spread of TB infection, drug resistance and TB/HIV co-infection.

USAID is the lead US government agency for foreign assistance. The TB Alliance is a public-private partnership developing new and affordable tuberculosis (TB) medicines. Infecting one-third of the world's population, TB is one of the leading killers of AIDS patients.

“We face an urgent challenge -- a person dies every 15 seconds because of TB, killing more people than any infectious disease in the world today,” said Dr. E. Anne Peterson, Assistant Administrator for USAID's Bureau of Global Health. “The current arsenal of drugs and diagnostics is no match for TB. New drugs to speed cures must be a part of the coordinated global effort.”

“This award signals the importance that USAID places on overcoming tuberculosis and strengthens the coalition hard at work to deliver a faster and affordable cure for TB, so we can conquer this devastating epidemic,” said Dr. Maria C. Freire, President & CEO, TB Alliance. “With investments and leadership like this, we can ensure that everyone can participate in the benefits of such a major health dividend.”

In 1998, as part of an expanding strategy in infectious and reemerging diseases, USAID began a significant and focused program in TB. The scale up of USAID's TB efforts has been extraordinarily fast and widespread. USAID supports country-level programs in 34 countries, including 16 of the 22 high-burden countries and committed \$78 million to international TB in 2004, in addition to the U.S. Government's contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria.

The TB Alliance has established the first, most comprehensive portfolio of potential TB drugs since the 1960s. USAID's pledge comes at a time when two of the TB Alliance's lead compounds are approaching clinical trials and will support the continuous efforts to invigorate the TB drug pipeline. The portfolio includes, among others, a program to advance novel nitroimidazoles, several projects in the fluoroquinolone class of compounds, and earlier discovery projects based on new targets. The emerging pipeline is the result of ongoing efforts to engage industry, academia and clinicians worldwide.

“The TB Alliance has been working aggressively to build and advance its portfolio as well as support the field of TB drug development. This award is a major asset to a global effort that is poised to make a revolutionary impact on TB control,” said Dr. Lee Reichman of the New Jersey Medical School National TB Center and President, Stakeholders Association of TB Alliance.

Operating as a non-profit biotechnology firm, the TB Alliance oversees the projects in its portfolio and strategically invests in platform technologies to lower research and development hurdles and advance TB drug development. All projects are pursued in keeping with the TB Alliance's principles of affordability, access and adoption.

Fifty years after the introduction of the first TB drugs, tuberculosis control rests on a six-to-nine month regimen and requires tens of thousands of healthcare workers for its administration. Despite a successful decade-long scale-up effort, the international standard of control (DOTS) only reaches about one-third of TB patients. The rise of multi-drug resistant TB and HIV-AIDS has further highlighted the inadequacies of current TB drugs. In 2000 the TB Alliance was created to be the international instrument to ensure the development of new, affordable TB drugs that provide treatment in weeks, thereby enhancing the reach and success of TB control programs worldwide.

The USAID grant builds on a solid basis of other foundation and government support since the TB Alliance's inception in 2000. Seed funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation has been complemented by Dutch Ministry of Development and in-kind support from the US National Institutes of Health as well as several pharmaceutical companies.

About the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

The U.S. Agency for International Development administers the U.S. foreign assistance program providing economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 80 countries worldwide.

About the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance)

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, and improve treatment of latent infection. The TB Alliance builds a portfolio of promising drug candidates, manages their development through cooperative deals with public and private partners, and provides staged funding and expert scientific and management guidance. Partners include the Korean Research Institute of Chemical Technology (KRICT), Wellesley College, Johns Hopkins University, the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (IUATLD), and the Research Triangle Institute. For more information, visit <http://www.tballiance.org>.

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