Pfizer Inc.

Pfizer Assists World Health Organization in Search for New Treatments Against Diseases of the Developing World

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New York (ots/PRNewswire) -

- Company Opens its Compound Library to Help Search for New Anti-Parasitic Medicines

Pfizer announced today collaboration that gives access to its library of medicinal compounds -- the world's largest -- and also brings scientists from developing countries into Pfizer's laboratories for training in drug discovery techniques.

The collaboration with The Special Program for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases of the WHO (WHO/TDR) is part of a new effort to link the research resources of a major pharmaceutical company to a global network of discovery research, and speed the search for new drugs to combat some of the world's most deadly parasitic diseases, including malaria, leishmaniasis, African trypanosomiasis, onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis and Chagas' disease.

Under the arrangement, scientists in institutes affiliated with the WHO/TDR-sponsored Compound Evaluation Network are testing thousands of compounds from the Pfizer library. In a process called "screening," the researchers are seeking to identify "hits" -- compounds that show initial activity against a range of tropical parasites.

As part of the collaboration, developing country researchers supported by a second WHO/TDR network -- the Medicinal Chemistry Network -- are working with scientists at Pfizer's laboratories in Sandwich, UK, to further evaluate the "hits" and from those select "lead" compounds -- those with the greatest potential to be developed into new medicines for parasitic disease treatment and prevention. They are also being trained by Pfizer scientists in the latest drug discovery research methods and use of state-of-the-art tools. Following this training, they will return to their home countries to deploy their new knowledge and skills.

"This agreement with Pfizer is a step forward in expanding worldwide capacity in tropical disease research, because it enhances access to research tools for developing country researchers and expands access to large numbers of compounds for screening to identify new leads," said Dr Robert Ridley, director of WHO/TDR.

"This collaboration also supports the sharing of knowledge between developed and developing country scientists, necessary to build research capacity in developing countries," Ridley added.

Pfizer has initially provided 12,000 compounds, many of which are known to have activity against protozoan or helminth parasites. As WHO/TDR increases screening capacity across its network, Pfizer will provide more compounds. The company's scientists will identify the compounds most likely to address biochemical targets associated with anti-parasitic activity.

"People are suffering in developing countries and we want to help by sharing resources and boosting research against tropical diseases," said Dr. Martin Mackay, senior vice president of Research & Technology, Pfizer Global Research & Development. "This is early-stage research, which means that effective new treatments are still years downstream, but it certainly improves the chances of identifying compounds that may lead to new drugs. We believe public-private research collaborations are vital to tackling heath challenges in developing countries, and we are already exploring ways in which our collaboration with WHO/TDR might be expanded to further aid in the search for drugs with the potential to treat tropical

diseases," he added.

WHO/TDR's Compound Evaluation and Medicinal Chemistry Networks include institutes and laboratories worldwide with broad expertise in parasitic diseases. The Pfizer collaboration, however, provides the TDR-sponsored networks with greatly expanded access to chemical compounds for screening and research.

Dr. Ridley hopes the new Pfizer collaboration will encourage other companies to join and expand the WHO/TDR Networks, and to explore further collaborations with developing country researchers in discovery research. "This can be a model for other industry collaboration. It can help attract more companies to invest in tropical disease drug discovery," he said.

Malaria, alone, kills an estimated 1.2 million people a year, mostly in Africa, according to WHO. Other tropical diseases, while claiming a smaller death toll, still put the health of millions of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America at risk every year, and are responsible for an enormous burden of illness and disability.

Pfizer is constantly seeking new medicines to treat the most serious health threats to populations globally, including non-communicable diseases that have become an increasing concern in the developed world, and infectious diseases such as malaria, still very prevalent in developing countries.

WHO/TDR is an independent global program of scientific collaboration established in 1975 and co-sponsored by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank and the WHO.

Pfizer Inc: Working for a healthier world

Founded in 1849, Pfizer is the world's largest research-based pharmaceutical company taking new approaches to better health. We discover and develop innovative medicines to treat and help prevent disease for both people and animals. Through consistent, high-quality manufacturing and distribution operations, our medicines reach patients in 180 nations. We also partner with healthcare providers, governments and local communities around the world to expand access to our medicines and to provide better quality healthcare and health system support. At Pfizer, our colleagues work every day to help people stay happier and healthier longer and to reduce the human and economic burden of disease worldwide.

Notes to editors:
Other Pfizer initiatives:

Zithromax/chloroquine clinical trial program -- Pfizer scientists currently are developing a potential malaria treatment based on its widely used antibiotic Zithromax. Dosed in combination with chloroquine, Zithromax has demonstrated positive results against malaria in a pilot study. Clinical studies are ongoing at 19 centers in 10 countries in South America, Southeast Asia, Southwest Asia and Africa.

Clinton Global Initiative (GCI) -- Pfizer has joined a collaborative effort to address global health issues by committing US$15 million to help close critical treatment gaps in malaria in Senegal, Ghana and Kenya. Through the CGI, Pfizer is partnering with governments, leading local and international organizations like UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the President's Malaria Initiative (USAID), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to help develop and strengthen programs for the effective treatment and management of malaria.

Global Health Fellows -- The program sends Pfizer colleagues on assignments to work with non-governmental and multi-lateral organizations addressing HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria.

@@start.t1@@ - Since 2003, more than 100 Fellows have been selected to work with 23 non-governmental organizations in 29 countries to deliver healthcare and health system support to those in need around the world.@@end@@

Infectious Diseases Institute -- Pfizer partners with the Academic Alliance Foundation, Makerere University, Pangaea Global AIDS Foundation, the Infectious Diseases Society of America, and other organizations to support training and treatment activities of the Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI) in Kampala, Uganda. This regional

training and treatment center is empowering the local healthcare
providers to care for a population desperately in need of HIV/AIDS
treatment and to train others.

@@start.t2@@   - Since 2004, the IDI has trained more than 1,000 healthcare providers
       from 22 African countries.
    - The center has delivered care to more than 19,000 patients so far.
    - IDI is also partnering with Exxon Mobil to expand training programs to
      include the latest advances in malaria diagnosis, treatment and patient
      care.@@end@@

   Diflucan Partnership Program -- Diflucan(R) (fluconazole), an
antifungal that treats two fungal opportunistic infections associated
with AIDS, is provided free of charge to governmental and
non-governmental organizations in developing countries.

@@start.t3@@   - The program has donated approximately US$375 million in medicine to
      organizations who treat HIV positive patients with life-threatening
      fungal infections. The program is active in 47 countries hardest hit
      by HIV/AIDS.
    - Since 2000, the Diflucan Partnership Program supported the training of
      20,000 health professionals in the diagnosis and treatment of fungal
      opportunistic infections.@@end@@

   International Trachoma Initiative -- A public-private partnership
dedicated to eliminating trachoma, the world's leading cause of
preventable blindness, through health worker training, patient
education and donations of the antibiotic, Zithromax(R)
(azithromycin).

@@start.t4@@   - The ITI has given 37 million treatments of Zithromax(R) (azithromycin)
      to trachoma patients in 12 countries as part of the WHO SAFE strategy
      that combines prevention and treatment. Since 1998 the program has
      supported the training of thousands of health workers around the world
      who, in turn, have completed more than 220,000 surgeries to treat
      advanced cases of trachoma.@@end@@

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