

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**STATEMENT ISSUED FOLLOWING MEETING WITH PHARMACEUTICAL
AND DIAGNOSTIC COMPANIES WORKING ON HIV AND AIDS**

New York, 9 October 2008

I met today with senior executives of seventeen of the world's research-based and generic pharmaceutical and diagnostic companies. Together with senior officials from the United Nations system, we met to review progress on strengthening individual and collective efforts to expand access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services in low- and middle-income countries. This meeting was a follow-up to the last high-level dialogue between the UN and pharmaceutical and diagnostic companies in July 2006.

All participants agreed that increasing access to vaccines, diagnostics and medicines is essential in scaling up prevention and treatment efforts. We stressed the importance of intellectual property in encouraging and ensuring research and development of new therapeutic and diagnostic options. Participants reiterated their support for the flexibilities in the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health, and related WTO decisions.

We agreed that our work to increase access to HIV prevention and treatment had contributed to the development of health care systems, but that more strengthening needed to happen. While this is primarily the responsibility of national governments, important efforts have already been made through partnerships with industry. More can be done, especially to address shortages of the health workforce and improve managerial capacities.

We recognized the important strides taken since 2006, including an increase in the number of people receiving antiretroviral treatment in low-and middle income countries. As many as 3 million people were on treatment by the end of 2007, up from 1.3 million in 2006. There have been significant price reductions for first-line and pediatric antiretroviral drugs, and some second-line products. Two new classes of drugs have been introduced and new heat-stable formulations and fixed-dose combinations have been developed. There has also been further investment and development of technologies for prevention and diagnosis of HIV and for monitoring the efficacy of antiretroviral therapy in adults and children. We have also seen increased bilateral cooperation between research-based and generic pharmaceutical companies and new initiatives on laboratory strengthening.

We acknowledged progress in updating WHO guidelines on HIV diagnosis and treatment; the strengthening of the WHO pre-qualification programme; the establishment by the UN of a market intelligence system to track and inform antiretroviral drug supply and demand; and the support provided by the UN to procurement and supply management systems.

We noted that despite the gains, the epidemic continues to outstrip our best efforts. Only one-third of those who need antiretroviral treatment in low-and middle-income countries are getting it. Each day, for every two people who are placed on antiretroviral treatment, five more are infected. Collectively, we still have more work to do.

Building on their many programmes and initiatives, companies have committed individually, in accordance with their expertise and portfolios, to:

- Invest further in research and development of new HIV-related medicines adapted to resource limited settings to be used safely in children, adolescents, adults and pregnant women;
- Invest further in developing reliable and affordable technologies to diagnose HIV and TB (among people living with HIV) and to monitor the efficacy of treatment ;
- Enhance efforts towards urgently needed Universal Access to infant HIV diagnosis;
- Invest further in research and development of new biomedical HIV prevention technologies, including vaccines, microbicides and pre and post-exposure prophylaxis;
- Further support training of staff and maintenance of laboratory equipment.
- Register HIV medications and diagnostics widely and ensure reliable and sustainable delivery of products meeting international quality standards.

Building on their many programmes and initiatives, the UN system agreed to:

- Continue advocacy and resource mobilization for and the provision of technical assistance for maintaining the rollout of safe, effective and quality-assured first-line therapies to treat HIV infection for the further pursuit of Universal Access and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.
- Continue to strengthen WHO prequalification programme for urgently needed essential medicines and diagnostics.
- Promote information sharing between the UN, national regulatory authorities and the companies in the prequalification process to better facilitate product registration and licensing, including fast-track regulatory approval of prequalified quality products and to encourage harmonization of regulatory standards.
- Maintain updated technical guidance for safe, feasible, affordable HIV treatment and testing aligned with a public health approach and up-to-date forecasts to inform antiretroviral supply and demand.
- Convene within the next six months in-depth technical consultations among HIV experts and between the UN and the companies on pediatric formulations and second- and third -line regimens for adults.

We look forward to greater collaboration between the private sector and the UN to expand existing efforts in the spirit of Goal 8 of the MDGs on building a global partnership for development. Progress on all fronts is essential if we are to reverse the AIDS epidemic. We agreed to continuing to hold periodic high-level meetings, under the leadership of UNAIDS, to take stock of progress and to identify new collaborative measures.

PARTICIPANTS

Pharmaceutical and Diagnostic Companies:

Abbott	Aspen	Aurobindo
Becton Dickinson	bioMerieux	Boehringer Ingelheim
Gilead Sciences	GlaxoSmithKline	Hetero
Inverness Medical Innovations	Johnson & Johnson	Matrix
Merck and Co., Inc.	Pfizer	Ranbaxy
Roche		
Shanghai Kehua Bio-Engineering		

From the United Nations:

Secretary-General	WHO	UNICEF
UNAIDS	UNDP	