



International
Federation of
Pharmaceutical
Manufacturers &
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Internationale de
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IFPMA Statement

130th Executive Board of the World Health Organization

IFPMA Statement under agenda item 6.11, “Elimination of Schistosomiasis”

Remarks by Mario Ottiglio, Associate Director, Global Health Policy and Public Affairs

Geneva, 20 January 2012

Mr. Chairman, Madam Director General, distinguished members of the Executive Board, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to input on the important discussions regarding the elimination of schistosomiasis. The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA) represents leading research-based pharmaceutical companies as well as national industry associations across the world.

We support the ongoing talks to eliminate schistosomiasis, a disease affecting more than 220 million worldwide – with more than 90% of the cases occurring in sub-Saharan Africa.

Our industry has actively engaged in the fight against neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) by increasing access to treatments through medicine donation programs – several of which date back to decades

.In the case of schistosomiasis, one of our member companies, Merck KGaA, has donated 25 million tablets of Praziquantel annually—more recently doubling its effort to 50 million tablets—to help reduce the disease burden and improve people’s health.

We understand however that Praziquantel needs to become available in greater quantities in order to make elimination over the next decade a realistic possibility.

Later this month, the company will make a major announcement regarding the donation of tablets.

Mr Chairman, Colleagues: the increased pledges will enable us to contribute to meeting the WHO goals for schistosomiasis in a very significant and impactful way.

While the Industry has an important role to play, it is only one of the global community of partners. Improving sanitation, increasing access to safe water, strengthening capacity-building and education efforts to reduce disease burden, and investing to reinforce weak and fragmented health systems are all challenges that should be met through engagement of all of us in this room.

Furthermore to solve the schistosomiasis puzzle, a key prerequisite is the availability of sufficient quantity and high quality of the active pharmaceutical ingredient.

Beyond donations, our engagement in fighting NTDs is a long-term endeavor: we are the second largest funder of R&D for neglected diseases.

The WHO has set clear goals that, despite the complexity of schistosomiasis and other neglected tropical diseases, are achievable. The international community has never been so close to the finish line but we have not won this fight yet.

Schistosomiasis is another example of how a concerted and dedicated multi-stakeholder approach can be the best means to achieving global health goals.