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(www.ifpmaassembly2014.org).

Thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to speak at the closing session.

First of all, I'd like to thank you all for coming to the IFPMA Assembly today and having a lively and fruitful discussion on innovation, inclusiveness and sustainability. Today we have looked at innovation in all its different forms, and a number of the panels made reference to partnerships as being a solution to achieving healthier societies which are inclusive and sustainable.

As many of you know, the Millennium Development Goals proved a driving force for much collaboration, both within governments and across sectors, and changed the way in which many companies approached their social purpose. The MDGs made it clear that each industry sector can use its particular skills to serve as partners in the fields of healthcare, information technology, nutrition, to name a few. Regarding the goals of "reducing child mortality" and "improving maternal health", we have made a certain progress especially in (Northern) Africa and (Eastern) Asia since year 2000. It's true that there are still many challenges to be addressed. However, we believe continuous efforts would overcome these global issues in the Post-2015 era.

The pharmaceutical sector has a long track record of working in partnerships. Our engagement dates back decades, especially on communicable diseases such as malaria, TB and HIV/AIDS, as well as Neglected Tropical diseases. And we continue to innovate in this area. Especially for combatting NTDs, member associations and companies of IFPMA have been advancing each approach steadily and their efforts are equally to be evaluated.

For example, my company, Astellas is engaged in a uniquely new partnership with Merck, TI Pharma, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute and 2 other partners to develop orally dispersible formulation candidates of the existing 'gold standard' drug praziquantel for the treatment of schistosomiasis. Schistosomiasis is the third most prevalent tropical disease in Africa. There is a pressing need to treat preschool children, namely under 6 years old, since there is yet no suitable drug formulation available for this high-risk group. The new drug formulation is made smaller and is expected to mask its bitter taste so it is easier to swallow for younger children and it can be taken even without water. The program is currently moving into the clinical phase.

Astellas has also been involved in setting up Japan's first public-private partnership in pharmaceutical field, which is called the GHIT Fund; "Global Health Innovative Technology Fund". The GHIT Fund has the objective to promote the development of medicines to fight infectious diseases that are still endemic among impoverished countries. GHIT Fund is a platform supported by not only companies but also multi sectors such as Japanese Government, Bill & Mellinda Gates Foundation and UNDP. Since 2013 when GHIT Fund was established, over 20 partnership programs have been assisted. We can recognize the high interest in this activity and expect fruits from some projects in the near future.

These are just two partnerships among the more than 250 partnerships that the research-based pharmaceutical industry is engaging in today. And at least 70 of them are focused on non-communicable diseases that represent today the biggest burden in low and middle income countries. You can explore these programs at the Devex Hotspot at the close of this meeting and I strongly recommend all to try it.



IFPMA

Our NCDs partnerships are breaking new ground in helping improve availability of treatment, distribution and supply chain as well as access to healthcare at large.

We are also innovating in the way in which we create new partnerships: over the past few years IFPMA has partnered with international organizations to deliver creative solutions for the prevention and control of NCDs.

You will hopefully all have downloaded the new mobile application which we launched today with the World Health Professionals Associations. IFPMA has also forged a partnership that provides door-to-door counselling through volunteers on healthy lifestyles to people in low-income countries. This is the result of a global initiative, called "4 Healthy Habits" between IFPMA and the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) and has the potential to be rolled out to over 3 million IFRC volunteers who have been equipped innovative tools to increase awareness in their communities.

By quoting Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, we can recognize the importance of partnership beyond sectors. When he spoke about the post-2015 development agenda and the power of partnerships to address complex challenges at a global level, he said "partnerships and alliances are the wave of the future in helping governments to pursue their development priorities and in eliciting the engagement of all those in a position to help make a difference."

I truly believe that research-based pharmaceutical companies are leading by example in the field of partnership activities for achieving the healthy lives of people. We are engaged in numerous initiatives, and intend to continue to do so, as a solutions partner that can make a positive impact on developing new treatments for diseases of the developing world, increasing availability of treatments and contributing to improving health system infrastructures.

And continuing the push further with new innovative partnerships, I am greatly honoured today to introduce Dr Jennie Ward-Robinson, President and CEO of PAHO Foundation who is going to tell you about a new partnership we are launching today to improve prevention of women's cancers and cancer registries in Central and Latin America.

And now, let me hand the baton over to Dr Ward-Robinson to tell us about this exciting new partnership.

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