



news release

Pharma supports “Reaching a Billion – ending Neglected Tropical Diseases Gateway to UHC” report and call to action

Geneva, 14 December 2017: 1.5 billion of the world’s poorest have their lives blighted by blindness and deformities or, worse, cut short by what are called “neglected tropical diseases” (NTDs). That is more than the total population of the USA, Europe and Japan combined. Thankfully, something is being done about it. The report entitled “Reaching a Billion – ending Neglected Tropical Diseases Gateway to Universal Health Coverage (UHC)”, released by [Uniting to Combat Neglected Tropical Diseases](#) today, provides a scorecard of progress made since the London Declaration in 2012. The report recognizes great progress is being made thanks to collaborative global efforts that have reached already over 1 billion people affected by NTDs. However, we now need to reach the rest of the 1.5 billion people who need treatment, and who are often among the most marginalized and stigmatized. The research-based biopharmaceutical industry supports the call for action, and is committed to live up to its pledges and extend donations program when needed.

The report recognizes the contribution of the research-based biopharmaceutical industry in preventing and treating neglected tropical diseases and, that it is delivering on its London Declaration pledge of 14 billion treatments through 2020 to address the 10 diseases responsible for more than 90% of the global neglected disease burden. The report notes that in 2016 alone, more than one billion people of the world’s poorest population received treatment of at least one NTD. That’s one in seven of the world’s population who received treatment for an NTD. This unprecedented global partnership has been recognized in the [Guinness Book of Records](#) for the most medicines ever donated in 24 hours.

Uniting to Combat NTDs also recognizes the efforts being made into innovation made by the research-based biopharmaceutical industry into new treatments and diagnosis for NTDs. Advances and innovations in research make it possible to treat more people faster. It notes for example, that new research has found that combinations of three existing drugs (ivermectin, DEC, and albendazole [IDA]) can dramatically improve treatment for lymphatic filariasis and decrease the duration of programs. This finding has led WHO to endorse the combination for use in treatment programs and to accelerate progress towards elimination.

In a review published earlier this year, IFPMA members are involved in 109 active R&D projects for NTDs¹ to develop new or improved treatments and vaccines for NTDs. Of these programs, 90% are done in collaboration with universities, non-governmental organizations and public and private sector institutes.

IFPMA supports the link made in the report, and the direction of travel to further strengthen efforts on NTDs and UHC. “Access to NTDs interventions are an integral part of UHC, and here the private sector plays a crucial role, through commitments such as the London Declaration, as well as through more than 40 partnerships of our members with governments and community-based platforms which focus on strengthening health system capacities. By assisting countries to build health services that are accessible and staffed with qualified healthcare workers, they help bolster the supply chain and facilitate the delivery of medicines and vaccines down the last mile”² said Thomas Cueni, Director General, IFPMA. Additionally, Cueni said: “these large-scale campaigns offer a fantastic opportunity to reach people with other health interventions”.

Without maintaining a strong focus on strengthening health systems, the gains that are currently being made in NTDs and other global health challenges would not be possible. Health system strengthening is fundamental element in delivering universal health coverage, which is central to the global health security agenda as a whole.

¹ “[Doing our part – Innovating to fight Neglected Tropical Diseases](#)” provides the most up-to-date record of active research and development (R&D) projects for the next generation of medicines and vaccines for NTDs.

² See [IFPMA Health Partnerships Directory](#).



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About IFPMA:

IFPMA represents research-based pharmaceutical companies and associations across the globe. The research-based pharmaceutical industry's 2 million employees discover, develop and deliver medicines and vaccines that improve the life of patients worldwide. Based in Geneva, IFPMA has official relations with the United Nations and contributes industry expertise to help the global health community find solutions that improve global health.

For further information, please contact:

Helen Gallagher
Communications Director
h.gallagher@ifpma.org
+41 22 338 32 20

Morgane De Pol
Manager, Communications and
Public Affairs
m.depol@ifpma.org
+41 22 338 32 00

Sadia Kaenzig
Manager, Communications
s.kaenzig@ifpma.org
+41 22 338 32 00