Combating Aids, malaria and tuberculosis: research partnership Europe/developing countries

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PURPOSE : to propose a new partnership between Europe and the developing countries for the development of new medecines and new vaccines agasint HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.
CONTENT : the European Commission has proposed to support a long-term partnership between Europe and developing countries by providing EUR 200 million for the development of new medicines and vaccines against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. This European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) brings together EU Member States plus Norway, developing countries and industry in a joint effort to combat poverty-linked diseases. To adequately furnish the EDCTP programme with the necessary financial means, the European Commission has now proposed to contribute EUR 200 million of Community funds towards the EUR 600 million required for the total financial volume of the programme. Further EUR 200 million worth of activities stem from participating countries' national clinical research programmes that are brought together under a common objective. The remaining EUR 200 million will be acquired from other donors and industry. This initiative by the EU and participating European countries will allow for the rapid launching of a first set of urgent measures, once European Parliament and Council have given their green light. The vicious circle of disease and poverty causes a fundamental public health and economic crisis in developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis (TB) alone account for more than five million deaths every year, 95% of these in the developing world. To respond to this emergency, the Commission launched already in 2001 its Programme for Action, based on three pillars: impact, affordability and research & development. The Programme for Action aims at combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis with the emphasis on poverty reduction. The EDCTP is a response for more and better research and development activities to fight the three diseases. To be successful, such a partnership initiative must evolve under the guidance of developing countries as the drivers of the real needs. Therefore, the EDCTP initiative has ensured that African clinicians and health system representatives took already part in this initiative at its very early stages, enabling them to assume a leading role in its further development. Similarly, to encompass the essential expertise that only industry can provide with respect to the clinical development of new drugs and vaccines. In practical terms, the EDCTP programme foresees: - central European and African management facilities; - measures for improved networking of European clinical research programmes and for global advocacy; - support for clinical research capacities in developing countries; - a training scheme for local researchers and clinicians that will strengthen the locally available human resources to guarantee the long-term sustainability of the EDCTP programme; - and, as its core mandate, support for prioritised clinical trials of new drugs and vaccine candidates that urgently await clinical testing. The present initiative, in line with the idea of a EuropeanResearch Area, is perfectly integrated within the activities of the 6th Framework Programme and represents the first attempt of a joined research programme between the European Union, Member States and associated countries. EU Member States and Norway will invest at national level more than EUR 1 billion for the years 2002-2007 in biomedical research to develop new clinical means to cure or prevent HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.