



Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative*

**DNDi Welcomes the Global Health Innovative Technology Fund (GHIT Fund)**  
*New Japan-Driven Initiative to Accelerate Research & Development  
Innovation for Neglected Diseases*

[Tokyo, Japan, and Geneva, Switzerland – 8 April 2013] **The Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi), based in Geneva, Switzerland, and DNDi Japan, based in Tokyo, welcome the launch of the Global Health Innovative Technology Fund (GHIT Fund), an initiative supported by the Japanese government, several Japanese pharmaceutical companies, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.**

The GHIT Fund will support and stimulate research & development (R&D) projects for neglected diseases by leveraging scientific resources and expertise of the pharmaceutical industry in Japan, facilitating the collaboration between product development partnerships (PDPs), Japanese pharmaceutical companies, and the public sector, including universities and research institutes. The GHIT Fund now adds to the efforts of the past decade to accelerate innovation for diseases that affect the poorest of the poor in developing countries.

*‘This initiative comes at a time when the R&D landscape for neglected diseases is particularly in need of resources to guarantee that R&D is boosted in the long-term and that patients gain access to the fruits of that research’,* said Dr Bernard Pécoul, Executive Director of the Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative* (DNDi). *‘We are delighted about the GHIT Fund’,* he added.

Since 2003, DNDi has actively collaborated with various public and private partners in Japan, including the University of Tokyo for the development of Ascofuranone for sleeping sickness and for establishing a research centre on visceral leishmaniasis in Bangladesh; the Kitasato Institute for screening of natural substances and establishing a pan-Asian screening network; and more recently with the pharmaceutical companies Eisai Ltd., to develop a pro-drug of ravuconazole for Chagas disease – currently in clinical stage, and Astellas Pharma for drug discovery for sleeping sickness, leishmaniasis, and Chagas disease.

*‘We congratulate the GHIT founding partners for this excellent initiative and we aim to both continue and renew our fruitful partnerships in Japan to develop new treatments for neglected diseases, including sleeping sickness, leishmaniasis, Chagas disease, filarial infections, and paediatric HIV’,* said Professor Haruki Yamada, Chairman of the Board, DNDi Japan.

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**About Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative* (DNDi)**

DNDi is a not-for-profit research and development (R&D) organization working to deliver new treatments for the most neglected diseases, in particular sleeping sickness (human African trypanosomiasis), Chagas disease, leishmaniasis, filarial infections, and paediatric HIV. Since its inception in 2003, DNDi has delivered six treatments: two fixed-dose antimalarials (ASAQ and ASMQ), nifurtimox-eflornithine combination therapy (NECT) for late-stage sleeping sickness, sodium stibogluconate and paromomycin (SSG&PM) combination therapy for visceral leishmaniasis in Africa, a set of combination therapies for visceral leishmaniasis in Asia, and a paediatric dosage form of benznidazole for Chagas disease. DNDi was established in 2003 by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the Indian Council of Medical Research, Brazil’s Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, the Kenya Medical Research Institute, the Ministry of Health of Malaysia, and Institut Pasteur in France, with the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/World Health Organization’s Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) as a permanent observer.

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