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News Release

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Merck to Raise Donation Tenfold to Eliminate Worm Disease

- **Merck commits to increase annual donation of praziquantel tablets to 250 million in the medium term**

Darmstadt / London, January 30, 2012 – Merck KGaA announced today that in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) it wants to eliminate the tropical worm disease schistosomiasis in Africa. The major offensive in this effort is Merck's commitment to a tenfold increase, from 25 million to 250 million, of its annual donation of praziquantel tablets, the most effective treatment for the parasitic worm disease schistosomiasis.

According to the WHO, with this donation of 250 million tablets of praziquantel per year the current shortfall of tablets could be filled. Furthermore, Merck is committed to maintaining its efforts until schistosomiasis is eliminated.

“By filling the praziquantel access gap, Merck adds to the prospects of eliminating schistosomiasis, the most important parasitic disease after malaria,” said Dr. Lorenzo Savioli, Director of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases.

As part of Merck's expanded commitment, the company also will conduct research to develop a new formulation of the drug for small children. Until now, praziquantel tablets have only been suitable for children aged five years and older.

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Merck KGaA

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“We are committed to the elimination of schistosomiasis in partnership with the WHO and others,” said Stefan Oschmann, Merck Executive Board member with responsibility for the Pharmaceuticals business sector. “We will have to create additional capacity to achieve the required quantities. A project team is working closely with the WHO to determine how to reach the target of 250 million tablets a year.”

Merck’s expanded attack against schistosomiasis was announced today in London during a meeting initiated by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the world’s largest private foundation. This meeting brought together leading international pharmaceutical companies, the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries as well as the WHO, the World Bank and several development organizations. Their aim is to support the WHO to achieve its goal of controlling or eliminating ten neglected tropical diseases, including schistosomiasis, by 2020 in order to improve and save the lives of several hundred million people around the world. The participants announced their intent today in a document titled: “The London Declaration on Neglected Tropical Diseases.”

“Merck is committed to more effectively fighting neglected tropical diseases,” said Oschmann. “It is clear to all participants that everyone must strengthen the efforts in their respective fields. Close coordination between the partners is just as crucial to success. The closer we coordinate the donation activities, research and development of new drugs, as well as the supply and distribution of drugs with each other, the more effectively we’ll be able to fight these diseases.”

Schistosomiasis is a chronic disease recognized as the second most prevalent and devastating parasitic disease in tropical countries after malaria. It is estimated that more than 200 million people are infected and that around 200,000 die from it each year. This chronic disease, which is transmitted from parasitic worms, is widespread in tropical and subtropical regions where poor populations have no access to clean water and sanitary installations. People become infected with the disease by worm larvae mainly in freshwater, for example while working, swimming, fishing or washing their



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clothes. The miniscule larvae penetrate human skin, enter the blood vessels and attack internal organs. The infection rate is particularly high among children of school age.

Praziquantel, the only drug available to treat all forms of schistosomiasis, is designated by the WHO as the “drug of choice”, providing a cost effective health solution to patients in need.

The Merck Praziquantel Donation Program was launched in 2007 in partnership with the WHO. Since then around 80 million tablets have been supplied and about 19 million children have been treated. By 2011, Merck’s annual donation had grown to about 25 million tablets. The further scale-up of the program will allow treatment of about 100 million children a year. The expanded Merck Praziquantel Donation Program will result in a financial commitment totaling around \$23 million a year.

The tablets, which carry the brand name Cesol[®] 600, are currently produced at a Merck site in Mexico. In December 2011, Merck had announced plans to double the number of tablets it currently provides to 50 million annually. Merck also announced to provide financial support for a WHO-led school awareness program to prevent the disease.

For more information about the fight against schistosomiasis as well as access to health care for underserved populations, please see:

http://www.merckgroup.com/en/responsibility/access_to_health/access_to_health.html

<http://www.who.int/schistosomiasis/en>

<http://www.gatesfoundation.org>.



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