



Statement

IFPMA Statement, WHA 65, Item 13.11, Elimination of Schistosomiasis

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Thank you for the opportunity to input on the important discussions regarding the elimination of schistosomiasis. The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA) represents leading research-based pharmaceutical companies as well as national industry associations across the world.

We support the ongoing talks to eliminate schistosomiasis, a disease affecting more than 220 million worldwide – with more than 90% of the cases occurring in sub-Saharan Africa.

Our industry has actively engaged in the fight against neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) by researching and developing medicines for these diseases and increasing access to treatments through medicine donation programs – several of which date back to decades. Last January, in the framework of the London Declaration, we announced a major commitment to donate 14 billion treatments annually until 2020 to control or eliminate nine major NTDs responsible for the 90% of the overall burden.

One of the most important commitments regarded schistosomiasis. One of our member companies, Merck KGaA, has announced a considerable increase of its donation of praziquantel tablets, reaching 250 million tablets in the medium term from the current 20 million per year donation program.

We understand however that Praziquantel needs to become available in greater quantities in order to make elimination over the next decade a realistic possibility.

Mr Chairman, Colleagues: the increased pledges will enable us to contribute to meeting the WHO goals for schistosomiasis in a very significant and impactful way.

While the Industry has an important role to play, it is only one of the global community of partners. Improving sanitation, increasing access to safe water, strengthening capacity-building and education efforts to reduce disease burden, and investing to reinforce weak and fragmented health systems are all challenges that should be met through engagement of all of us in this room.

Furthermore to solve the schistosomiasis puzzle, a key prerequisite is the availability of sufficient quantity and high quality of the active pharmaceutical ingredient. In addition, there is a need to treat very young children with an appropriate presentation of praziquantel.

Beyond donations, our engagement in fighting NTDs is a long-term endeavor: we are the second largest funder of R&D for neglected diseases. The WHO has set clear goals that, despite the complexity of schistosomiasis and other neglected tropical diseases, are achievable. The international community has never been so close to the finish line but we have not won this fight yet. Schistosomiasis is another example of how a concerted and dedicated multi-stakeholder approach can be the best means to achieving global health goals.