

MEDIA RELEASE • COMMUNIQUE AUX MEDIAS • MEDIENMITTEILUNG**Novartis continues commitment to go the last mile in effort to eliminate leprosy**

- *New five-year commitment includes donation of treatments worth more than USD 40 million and is expected to reach an estimated 1.3 million patients*
- *Novartis Foundation's new leprosy contact tracing program now launched in five countries*
- *The company and foundation have a strong legacy in the fight against leprosy, donating medicines and developing programs to improve care of patients*

Basel, August 28, 2015 – Novartis has renewed its pledge with the World Health Organization (WHO) to work to end leprosy by extending its donation of multidrug therapy (MDT) medicines to treat leprosy through the year 2020. This five-year agreement includes treatments worth more than USD 40 million and up to USD 2.5 million to support the WHO in handling the donation and logistics. Overall it is expected that the program will reach an estimated 1.3 million patients during the next five years. This is part of the company's commitment in 2012 to the London Declaration on Neglected Tropical Diseases.

"Leprosy is a treatable disease and multidrug therapy remains the cornerstone of the global leprosy elimination strategy," said Joseph Jimenez, CEO of Novartis. "We are proud to continue our work with the WHO to provide free treatment to leprosy patients worldwide. We also remain committed to our ongoing collaboration with governments, international agencies, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector to bring leprosy back onto the global health agenda and work toward our common goal of making leprosy history."

Novartis and the Novartis Foundation have a long-term commitment to leprosy treatment and control. Since 2000, Novartis has donated more than 56 million blister packs valued at approximately USD 90 million through the WHO, helping to treat more than six million leprosy patients worldwide.

The Novartis Foundation has been active in the fight against leprosy for nearly 30 years, previously focusing on innovative social marketing programs to reduce the stigma attached to leprosy and supporting patient rehabilitation.

In 2014, the Novartis Foundation launched a new leprosy elimination strategy developed with the top leprosy and disease elimination experts. The program includes four pillars: early detection and treatment, contact tracing and preventative treatment, surveillance and response and the development of diagnostic tools for faster and earlier diagnosis. The Novartis Foundation also helps to facilitate the logistics of the MDT donation with the WHO.

LPEP (Leprosy Post-Exposure Prophylaxis), a key program in the new strategy, has recently launched in India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal and Tanzania, with a pilot in Sri Lanka planned for launch later this year. LPEP is designed to decrease the risk of

developing leprosy, and reduce further transmission of the mycobacteria causing the disease. In this project, being done in collaboration with International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP) partners, the family, friends and other contacts of newly diagnosed patients are examined for leprosy and provided treatment if they also have leprosy, or preventative therapy if they are asymptomatic. This could decrease the risk of contacts developing leprosy in the years following contact by as much as 50-60%.¹

About multidrug therapy (MDT) and leprosy

Multidrug therapy (MDT) consists of three drugs (rifampicin, clofazimine and dapsone), two of which (rifampicin and clofazimine) were developed in the research laboratories of Novartis in the 1980s. Multidrug therapy has made it possible to treat patients, interrupt the transmission of leprosy and prevent disabilities. Even some patients with the severest form of the disease show visible clinical improvement within weeks of starting treatment.

Significant progress in the fight against leprosy has been one of the greatest public health successes. Global figures from the World Health Organization (WHO) on leprosy highlight these early successes, showing that the global burden of leprosy has been reduced by 95% since the 1980s. This is due in large part to the widespread availability of MDT which has reached 16 million patients since 1981.

However, the case detection rate (incidence) for leprosy has now plateaued at about 200,000–250,000 new diagnoses per year over the past 10 years and the disease remains endemic in high-burden pockets in many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.²

New diagnoses occur in children as well as adults, which suggests continued transmission of the disease, and a large proportion of patients are diagnosed late and often with severe disabilities.

The challenge of the last mile in the fight against leprosy is to interrupt transmission.

About the Novartis Foundation

The Novartis Foundation is a philanthropic organization pioneering innovative healthcare models that can have a transformational impact on the health of the poorest populations. We work hand-in-hand with our local and global partners to catalyze scalable and sustainable healthcare models to improve access and health outcomes, and to accelerate elimination of leprosy and malaria by focusing on interventions that aim to interrupt transmission. Everything we do is grounded in evidence and innovation, and our work is a continuous cycle of evaluation, adaptation and application. In 2014, the operational budget for the foundation was CHF 12 million and our programs reached 3.6 million people.

For more information, please visit:

www.novartisfoundation.org

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About Novartis

Novartis provides innovative healthcare solutions that address the evolving needs of patients and societies. Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Novartis offers a diversified portfolio to best meet these needs: innovative medicines, eye care and cost-saving generic pharmaceuticals. Novartis is the only global company with leading positions in these areas. In 2014, the Group achieved net sales of USD 58.0 billion, while R&D throughout the Group amounted to approximately USD 9.9 billion (USD 9.6 billion excluding impairment and amortization charges). Novartis Group companies employ approximately 120,000 full-time-equivalent associates. Novartis products are available in more than 180 countries around the world. For more information, please visit <http://www.novartis.com>.

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