

## News Release

January 30, 2011

### Merck Serono to Raise Donation Tenfold to Eliminate Worm Disease

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

Geneva / London, January 30, 2012 – Merck Serono, a division of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, 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 Serono'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 Serono is committed to maintaining its efforts until schistosomiasis is eliminated.

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

As part of Merck Serono'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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“We are committed to the elimination of schistosomiasis in partnership with the WHO and others,” said Stefan Oschmann, Executive Board Member of Merck KGaA and President of Merck Serono. “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 Serono’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, 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 Serono 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.”

Besides providing many more praziquantel tablets and developing a pediatric formulation, Merck Serono is also providing financial support for a WHO-led school awareness program to prevent the disease.

Schistosomiasis is a chronic disease recognized as the second most prevalent and devastating parasitic disease in tropical countries after malaria. It is estimated that

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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 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 Serono’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 and thus contribute to the elimination of the disease by 2020 as targeted by the WHO. 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<sup>®</sup> 600, are currently produced at a Merck Serono site in Mexico. In December 2011, Merck Serono had announced plans to double the number of tablets it currently provides to 50 million annually.

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.merckgroup.com/en/responsibility/access_to_health/access_to_health.html)

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

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

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### About Merck Serono

Merck Serono is the biopharmaceutical division of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a global pharmaceutical and chemical company. Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, Merck Serono discovers, develops, manufactures and markets prescription medicines of both chemical and biological origin in specialist indications. In the United States and Canada, EMD Serono operates as a separately incorporated affiliate of Merck Serono.

Merck Serono has leading brands serving patients with cancer (Erbix<sup>®</sup>, cetuximab), multiple sclerosis (Rebif<sup>®</sup>, interferon beta-1a), infertility (Gonal-f<sup>®</sup>, follitropin alfa), endocrine and metabolic disorders (Saizen<sup>®</sup> and Serostim<sup>®</sup>, somatropin), (Kuvan<sup>®</sup>, sapropterin dihydrochloride), (Egrifta<sup>®</sup>, tesamorelin), as well as cardiometabolic diseases (Glucophage<sup>®</sup>, metformin), (Concor<sup>®</sup>, bisoprolol), (Euthyrox<sup>®</sup>, levothyroxine). Not all products are available in all markets.

With an annual R&D expenditure of over € 1bn, Merck Serono is committed to growing its business in specialist-focused therapeutic areas including neurodegenerative diseases, oncology, fertility and endocrinology, as well as new areas potentially arising out of research and development in rheumatology.

### About Merck

Merck is a global pharmaceutical and chemical company with total revenues of € 9.3 billion in 2010, a history that began in 1668, and a future shaped by more than 40,000 employees in 67 countries. Its success is characterized by innovations from entrepreneurial employees. Merck's operating activities come under the umbrella of Merck KGaA, in which the Merck family holds an approximately 70% interest and shareholders own the remaining approximately 30%. In 1917 the U.S. subsidiary Merck & Co. was expropriated and has been an independent company ever since.

For more information, please visit [www.merckserono.com](http://www.merckserono.com) or [www.merckgroup.com](http://www.merckgroup.com)