

**CALL TO ACTION
FOR
LATIN AMERICA TO BOOST INNOVATION AND ACCESS
FOR NEGLECTED PATIENTS IN THE REGION**

6 ACTIONS FOR 2012 AND BEYOND

DNDi's 4th Partners' Meeting on 2 December 2011 in Rio de Janeiro, with the support of Fiocruz, marks exactly nine years since a remarkable meeting took place in the same city and which laid the foundations for the Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative* (DNDi). Since this time, there have been numerous international initiatives, notably within PAHO and WHO, through the Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property, which resulted from the Brazil and Kenya Resolution in 2007. Such initiatives aimed at stimulating needs-driven scientific innovation and ensuring access to essential health tools, including for neglected diseases.

In addition, in Latin America – a region unique in that it includes both endemic countries with pressing patient needs and emerging economies with substantial research and financing capacity – political leadership has deepened and the building blocks for regional coordination and harmonization in the health sector have been put into place. Institutions such as Fiocruz have taken a leading role in the struggle against neglected diseases, bringing excellence to research and development (R&D) for medicines and vaccines.

Nonetheless, both internationally and regionally, major challenges remain. Millions of neglected patients in Latin America are still suffering from poverty-related diseases. While inroads have been made to stimulate R&D in the region, the needs of the poorest have not been the focus of coordinated and sustained strategies that have translated into access for patients.

There are several key opportunities in the coming period to influence priority setting and strategies for neglected diseases in the regional health agenda as well as that of PAHO and WHO. The current efforts of integration under the auspices of MERCOSUR and UNASUR, the World Health Assembly, the PAHO Annual Meeting, and the 2012 G20 Mexico Summit/G8 are crucial to this process.

DNDi, as a result of the debates and discussions at its Partners' Meeting in Rio de Janeiro, with over 260 regional partners and members of the DNDi global network, calls first and foremost on Latin American governments, but also academia, NGOs, patient groups, private industry, and other key stakeholders, to address the following issues – as a matter of urgency:

1. Implementation:

- Based on the success of national control programmes in reducing transmission of Chagas disease through vector control, reproduce a similar model for treatment and follow-up of patients with Chagas disease and other neglected diseases.

2. R&D priority-setting and coordination:

- Establish, through inter-governmental platforms, neglected disease R&D priorities for the region and promote regional coordination of centres of excellence to share knowledge, identify synergies, reduce duplication, and accelerate the development of new health tools for neglected patients.

3. Regional regulatory harmonization:

- Build upon existing initiatives for regional harmonization of regulatory processes to streamline approval of essential health tools for neglected diseases, and improve access in the region.

4. Open innovation:

- Strengthen regional cooperation with new initiatives aimed at facilitating open innovation, greater sharing of research knowledge, technology transfer, and boosting industrial capacity in the region.

5. Innovative financing

- Support and/or create new sustainable funding mechanisms, such as air ticket taxes, financial transaction taxes (FTT), and sectoral taxes for global health, including R&D.

6. New R&D incentives:

- Support and/or develop new 'pull' incentive mechanisms that are relevant for the region – in addition to existing push mechanisms – to attract private and public partners in the region to address existing R&D innovation gaps, in a way that also ensures access.