

NTD SUMMIT 2017

Statement by Bernard Pécoul at the Global Partners' Meeting on Neglected Tropical Diseases

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The creation of the Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative* (DNDi) in 2003, like that of other product development partnerships, was the affirmation of a consensus: for diseases where commercial incentives to develop new diagnostics, drugs or vaccines, do not exist, research and development can only happen thanks to new innovative models that bring together public and private partners.

At the signing of the London Declaration, five years ago, we had two asks.

The first was to improve access to pharmaceutical company compound libraries, in order to replenish the Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) pipeline. Here, we have tested around three million compounds over the last few years. And we have built a new innovative model, the NTD Drug Booster Consortium, in which five companies share their knowledge and compounds. Today, Merck is joining as the sixth member of the Booster.

The second ask was to build partnerships with industry to develop new drugs for NTDs. I will mention just a few: on onchocerciasis, we have built partnerships with Bayer and another with AbbVie; for Chagas disease, we work closely with Mundo Sano and with Eisai; we are also working with Eisai on mycetoma, one of the most neglected among the neglected diseases; on sleeping sickness, with Sanofi we are expecting to have an oral treatment available next year that will totally change the management of the disease; and lastly, on leishmaniasis, we are working with many different partners to bring an oral treatment to a disease that is extremely difficult to manage today.

But to be successful, we also need strong leadership from WHO, and firm commitment from endemic country Ministries of Health and control programmes, as well as the involvement of public academic and research institutions. Without strong public leadership, we cannot achieve sustainable change.

Last but not least, we need investments in this field – I want to take this opportunity to thank public and private donors for their support.

We are not yet at the end. Today is a good opportunity to remind us of our responsibility to invest in innovation. We need to succeed in providing better, safer treatment for neglected patients.

Dr Bernard Pécoul, DNDi Executive Director