PRESS RELEASE

Merck Serono and Medicines for Malaria Venture Sign Agreement to Develop Potential Antimalarial Therapy

- Worldwide agreement for the investigational antimalarial drug candidate, DDD107498, allows Merck Serono to continue focusing on developing therapies for neglected tropical and poverty-related diseases
- Agreement cements collaboration between Merck Serono and Medicines for Malaria Venture focused on antimalarial drug development

Geneva, Switzerland, 1 April 2015. Merck Serono, the biopharmaceutical business of Merck, and Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) announced today that an agreement has been signed for Merck Serono to obtain the rights to the investigational antimalarial compound DDD107498 from MMV. This agreement underscores the commitment of Merck Serono to provide antimalarials for the most vulnerable populations in need.

“This agreement strengthens our Global Health research program and our ongoing collaboration with Medicines for Malaria Venture,” said Luciano Rossetti, Executive Vice President, Global Head of Research & Development at Merck Serono. “MMV is known worldwide for its major contribution to delivering innovative antimalarial treatments to the most vulnerable populations suffering from this disease, and at Merck Serono we share this goal.”

DDD107498 originated from a collaboration between MMV and the University of Dundee Drug Discovery Unit, led by Prof. Ian Gilbert and Dr. Kevin Read. The objective of the clinical program is to demonstrate whether the investigational compound exerts activity on a number of malaria parasite lifecycle stages, and remains active in the body long enough to offer potential as a single-dose treatment against the most severe strains of malaria.

While development and commercialization of the compound is under Merck Serono’s responsibility, MMV will provide expertise in the field of malaria drug development, including its clinical and delivery expertise, and provide access to its public and private sector networks in malaria-endemic countries.

Merck Serono has a dedicated Global Health R&D group working to address key unmet medical needs related to neglected diseases, such as schistosomiasis and malaria, with a focus on pediatric populations in developing countries. Its approach is based on public-private partnerships and collaborations with leading global health institutions and organizations in both developed and developing countries.
“Working with partners like Merck Serono is critical to the progress of potential antimalarial compounds, like DDD107498, through the malaria drug pipeline,” said Dr. Timothy Wells, Chief Scientific Officer at MMV. “Their Global Health Program is gaining momentum and we need more compounds to tackle malaria, a disease that places a huge burden on the world’s most vulnerable populations. DDD107498 holds great promise and we look forward to working with the Merck Serono team through the development phase.”

According to the World Health Organization, there were an estimated 198 million cases of malaria worldwide in 2013, and an estimated 584,000 deaths, primarily in young children from the developing world. The launch of the not-for-profit research foundation, MMV, in 1999 and a number of collaborations and partnerships, including those with Merck Serono, has contributed to reducing the major gap in malaria R&D investment and subsequent dearth of new medicines.

“It’s hugely encouraging to see the German pharmaceutical industry increasing their engagement in the development of novel antimalarials,” said global malaria expert Prof. Dr. Peter Kremsner, Director of the Institute for Tropical Medicine at the University of Tübingen, Germany. “The Merck Serono and MMV collaboration to develop DDD107498 is a great step. It’s a compound that offers lots of promise so I’m excited to see how it progresses.”

About Medicines for Malaria Venture

MMV is recognized as the leading product development partnership (PDP) in the field of antimalarial drug research and development. Its mission is to reduce the burden of malaria in disease-endemic countries by discovering, developing and facilitating delivery of new, effective and affordable antimalarial drugs.

Since its foundation in 1999, MMV has developed and brought to registration four new medicines with its partners, two of which are already saving lives. Managing the largest portfolio of antimalarial R&D projects ever assembled, of over 65 projects, MMV has nine new drugs in clinical development addressing unmet medical needs in malaria, including medicines for children, pregnant women and relapsing malaria, and drugs that could support the elimination/eradication agenda. MMV’s success in research and access & product management comes from its extensive partnership network of over 375 pharmaceutical, academic and endemic-country partners in 50 countries.

MMV’s vision is a world in which innovative medicines will cure and protect the vulnerable and under-served populations at risk of malaria, and ultimately help to eradicate this terrible disease.

For more information, please visit www.mmv.org

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About Merck Serono

Merck Serono is the biopharmaceutical business of Merck. With headquarters in Darmstadt, Germany, Merck Serono offers leading brands in 150 countries to help patients with cancer, multiple sclerosis, infertility, endocrine and metabolic disorders as well as cardiovascular diseases. In the United States and Canada, EMD Serono operates as a separately incorporated subsidiary of Merck Serono.
Merck Serono discovers, develops, manufactures and markets prescription medicines of both chemical and biological origin in specialist indications. We have an enduring commitment to deliver novel therapies in our core focus areas of neurology, oncology, immuno-oncology and immunology.

For more information, please visit www.merckserono.com

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Merck is a leading company for innovative, top-quality high-tech products in healthcare, life science and performance materials. The company has six businesses – Merck Serono, Consumer Health, Allergopharma, Biosimilars, Merck Millipore and Performance Materials – and generated sales of around € 11.3 billion in 2014. Around 39,000 employees work for Merck in 66 countries to improve the quality of life for patients, to further the success of customers, and to help meet global challenges. Merck is the world’s oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company – since 1668, the company has stood for innovation, business success and responsible entrepreneurship. Holding an approximately 70% interest, the founding family remains the majority owner of the company to this day. Merck, Darmstadt, Germany holds the global rights to the Merck name and brand. The only exceptions are Canada and the United States, where the company operates as EMD Serono, EMD Millipore and EMD Performance Materials.

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This document contains certain forward-looking statements that may be identified by words such as ‘believes’, ‘expects’, ‘anticipates’, ‘projects’, ‘intends’, ‘should’, ‘seeks’, ‘estimates’, ‘future’ or similar expressions, or by discussion of, among other things, vision, strategy, goals, plans, or intentions. It contains hypothetical future product target profiles, development timelines and approval/launch dates, positioning statements, claims and actions for which the relevant data may still have to be established. Stated or implied strategies and action items may be implemented only upon receipt of approvals including, but not limited to, local institutional review board approvals, local regulatory approvals, and following local laws and regulations. Thus, actual results, performances or events may differ from those expressed or implied by such statements.

We ask you not rely unduly on these statements. Such forward-looking statements reflect the current views of Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) and its partner(s) regarding future events, and involve known and unknown risks and uncertainties.

MMV accepts no liability for the information presented here, nor for the consequences of any actions taken on the basis of this information. Furthermore, MMV accepts no liability for the decisions made by its pharmaceutical partner(s), the impact of any of their decisions, their earnings and their financial status.