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BASEL INSTITUTE ON GOVERNANCE

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One pragmatic scenario: development of new clinical interventions to fight poverty related diseases

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The world faces enormous health challenges, many of which disproportionately affect Africa, which registers the highest maternal mortality ratios and bears the double burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases. HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis are the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in Africa. The HIV/AIDS pandemic, affecting 38 million people, 95% living in low and middle income countries, and with an average of 6 million new infections occurring every year, has disclosed weaknesses in the health systems and in the way sexual behaviour is addressed to encourage changes in societal norms to reduce the spread of the virus. The risk of dying from maternity causes in sub-Saharan Africa is one in sixteen compared to one in four thousand in Europe. Poverty related diseases, HIV/AIDS especially, claim a heavy toll on the most skilled and well educated segments of the population, impacting negatively on the socio-economic development efforts.

Confronted with these challenges, the global international community adopted the Millennium Declaration at the 2000 United Nations General Assembly Special Session and the respective Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs are the standard of accountability to be observed at all levels of leadership and to assess commitment to defeat extreme poverty, promote development and social justice. Taking into consideration the role of health in development, the Millennium Declaration integrates improvement of population health with poverty alleviation, human, and economic development. Africa will fall far short of the Millennium Development goals with fewer than ten countries likely meeting the income poverty goal. The findings of the Millennium Report commissioned by the UN Secretary General tells about shortfall for most MDGs – extreme poverty is still rampant, child mortality still high, no significant progress in access to safe drinking water and sanitation. WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE? To help Africa, more than increasing or dou-

bling overseas development aid (ODA), what is needed is improve access to life saving medicines while helping Africa to help itself through equity in sharing of the benefits of scientific innovation by breaking the “lack of tools and knowledge vicious circle” and bridging the know-do gap. HOW? Through investment in development, combined with innovative partnerships. Through investment in global public goods – research and development focused on health concerns of the poor (promoting partnerships, collaboration and networking at country, regional and international levels).

EDCTP is a partnership research program for the development of new medical products, microbicides and vaccines to fight HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis targeted at sub-Saharan Africa. It focuses on phase II/III clinical trials for the three diseases. The EDCTP is supported by a common decision of the European Council and the European Parliament. It is taken forward jointly by the European Commission, the European states and the Developing Countries because of a shared belief that funding in this research program can be more effective and added value can be derived by increased cooperation and coordination. The aim is to:

- Establish a sustained partnership to accelerate the development of accessible, adaptable, affordable new therapeutics, prophylactics and vaccines for HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria.
- Transfer knowledge and strengthen/build capacity of individual and institutional levels for clinical trials in Africa.
- Optimise synergies and collaboration for more research into products and more uptakes into policy. Promote North-North, South-South and South-North, North-South networking and expand synergies and complementarities with other initiatives such as Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV), Malaria Vaccine Initiative (MVI), Euro-

GOVERNANCE

BASEL INSTITUTE ON GOVERNANCE

Page 2

pean Malaria Vaccine Initiative (EMVI), African Malaria Network Trust (AMANET), International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), African AIDS Vaccine Program (AAVP), Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise, Global Alliance for Tuberculosis, etc.

- Mobilize sustained and predictable funding to achieve optimal knowledge production and usage by those who most need it.
- Promote partnerships, collaboration and networking at country, regional and international levels, and

- explore innovative public and private partnerships.

EDCTP tries to bring industry, the academic sector, scientific expertise, drug regulatory and policy makers together. EDCTP is seen as an innovative response to the needs expressed by African Union leaders when they launched the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).