

**Contribution to the consultation on an EU-Africa joint strategy
submitted by**

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Joint EU-Africa Strategy - Key Development Issues

We welcome the opportunity to participate in the preparation of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy. As an international coalition of product development public-private partnerships (PDPs) researching health solutions for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected diseases, we are driven by common objectives of developing appropriate and affordable preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic tools for use in developing countries. We laud the EC's leadership in the fight against diseases of poverty and its active role as a major aid donor. We are especially encouraged by the Development Commission's plan to concentrate on global health as a central priority and challenge. We have taken the opportunity to provide a joint statement under the heading of "Key Development Issues".

Every day more than 35,000 people die from AIDS, TB, malaria, and neglected diseases. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) call for immediate action to reverse the incidence of the diseases, and to reach other goals in maternal and child health and nutrition which are closely linked to progress in control of infectious diseases such as AIDS, TB, and malaria. The MDGs also emphasize the need to forge and support global partnerships to harness scientific advancement to promote development. Yet only a small percentage of the funding for research and development (R&D) worldwide is dedicated to creating new technologies for diseases of the developing world.

Much more needs to be done in this area, since investment in health pays dividends as improvements in adult health put society in a position to spring forward. The Joint EU-Africa Strategy provides an opportunity for the EU to accord science and the development for new health technologies a more central role in its development policy.

Capacity Building

Lowering mortality rates and improving health are complex objectives, requiring attention to building effective health systems and human resource capacity, including in the area of health-related Research & Development (R&D) in developing countries. These countries can contribute significantly to accelerated progress in finding new vaccines, drugs, microbicides, and other tools to fight the leading diseases of poverty.

Therefore we call for the funding of Networks of Excellence (NOE) with the capacity to conduct trials of new drugs, vaccines, and microbicides . These NOEs should provide career paths and adequate remuneration for young African researchers, thereby helping to reduce the 'brain drain', as well as training the next generation of researchers seeking viable, sustainable and long-term solutions. This will entail the mobilization and strengthening of local resources in developing countries. This will have to include greater capacity of drug regulatory agencies so that appropriate risk/benefit evaluations of new products are made in developing countries in some cases considering fast track registration to ensure access for patients .

Support for PDPs

Product development public-private partnerships play a crucial role in bringing the substantial talents and expertise that is available in the public and private sector to bear on health issues which affect the developing world. As PDPs are created to work as partnerships among academic, private, and public entities, they are uniquely situated to mobilize many diverse sectors, combining the many strengths of each group. The PDPs are increasingly demonstrating their important value-added in stimulating the development of a wide array of new vaccines, drugs, and other health products, and in mobilizing considerable financial and political support. Expanding support for PDPs allows researchers to capitalize on the assets of both public and private partners.

We ask the Commission to increase its support to global product development public-private partnership organizations which can deliver specific priority health products, foster effective partnerships between researchers in the north and south, and harness the know-how and resources of the public and private sectors.

Ensure access to health technologies

IPRs which serve today as a primary incentive to conduct research and stimulate industry engagement, need to be used as a tool for innovative collaboration among many partners of through such models as patent pools or other similar schemes. Much can be done to effectively manage such rights so as to ensure that the developed products are accessible by our target population : the patients in developing countries

We encourage the Commission to promote access to life-saving health innovation These will require a sustained investment in poverty related diseases R&D by EU as well as the full implementation of all currently provided safeguards for the use of the resulting technologies

Closer Co-operation

We would like to propose that DG Development works even more closely with other sections of the European Commission –such as DG Research, DG Health, DG Enterprise and DG Trade --that promote innovation and scientific development and that ensure the effective use of new health technologies

Multilateral Agencies

Finally, we suggest that the European Commission maintains its critical role in influencing the priorities of key intergovernmental organizations. Greater efforts are needed to ensure that as part of their contribution to improving health overall, multi-lateral agencies such as the World Health Organization and regional institutions such as the European and Developing Country Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) focus on critical activities, such as strengthening and building the technical capacity of national and regional agencies to participate in efforts to evaluate and deliver new health technologies.

The PDPs along with their many partners are racing against time to deliver new health interventions. Increasing support for their work will ensure that these critical tools are rapidly developed. The EU Africa Joint Strategy provides a unique opportunity to improve the way Development assistance is organized and related policies are defined and implemented. We urge the EU to capitalize on this opportunity to extend its support to the health R&D and especially to the PDPs.



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