TB ALLIANCE
GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR TB DRUG DEVELOPMENT

MMV
Medicines for Malaria Venture

6 February 2014

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Attention: Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee:

Re: Australian government support for medical research through TB and malaria Product Development Partnerships (PDP's)

We represent two Product Development Partnerships (PDPs), Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance) and Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV), leading global efforts to combat tuberculosis and malaria - diseases of strategic national and regional importance to Australia - through science, technology and innovation. The Australian government's critical investment of $10 million in medical research in 2012-2013 has been instrumental in advancing our efforts to develop lifesaving tools to tackle TB and malaria, while fostering key scientific collaborations that link Australian citizens and institutions to the international R&D pipeline.

As Product Development Partnerships (PDP), our organizations harness the strengths of the private, public, and academic sectors in order to efficiently drive innovation for otherwise neglected diseases. By leveraging strategic partnerships, we are able to deliver up to $2.50 of output for every dollar invested in our work.

With critical funding from the Australian government this past year and with the leveraged expertise of Australian partners - including Griffith University, Monash University, and the Queensland Institute of Medical Research (QIMR) among many others - our organizations are poised to deliver multiple improved health products to market for TB and malaria within the next 2 years. Products advanced to late stage development with support from the Australian Government will dramatically reduce health system costs and improve millions of lives, reflecting tremendous value for money. A recent study projected a net economic output of US $208.6 billion from 2013-2035 as a result of malaria reduction and elimination interventions.[1] Likewise, new tools in development for the treatment of multi-drug resistant forms of TB are expected to reduce treatment delivery costs for some forms of MDR-TB by 90%. In a current context in which treatments for extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) can cost health systems up to $1 million per patient to deliver - as recent cases in Queensland evidenced - investment in innovative treatment tools represents an incredibly cost effective intervention.

The fight against malaria and TB has direct implications for the social, political and economic integration of the Asia Pacific region, which is home to Australia's main economic partners. The increasingly obsolete tools used to treat TB and malaria have contributed to an alarming rise in drug-resistant disease, with a profound health and economic toll in advanced and developing economies alike. More than 1 billion people in the region are infected with TB, and the direct and indirect economic cost of TB has been estimated at $23 billion a year in India alone.[2] The 22 countries in Asia Pacific are also home to approximately 67% of the world's population at risk of malaria - some 2.3 billion people - and Southeast Asia is the global epicentre for drug-resistant forms of the disease. The traditional focus of Australian development assistance in the region on poverty alleviation and vulnerable populations is fully aligned with malaria and TB control,

[1] Purdy, M. et al. Am. J. Trop. Med. Hyg., 89(5), 2013, pp. 819–823

[2] WHO, 2013. Global TB Report, 2013; Government of India. (2011) *TB India 2011: Revised National TB Control Program Annual Status Report.*

elimination and eradication efforts, and these efforts promote economic dynamism in Asia in a self-sustaining manner.

With the Australian government's support, our organizations have already made tremendous progress. In addition to its four drugs already registered and saving lives, MMV has 7 new medicines in clinical development targeting malaria eradication by aiming to stop relapse, block transmission, cure drug-resistant strains and serve the needs of as many patients as possible. These include paediatric formulations of two Artemisinin Combination Therapies (ACTs) - Eurartesim® and Pyramax® - that have been developed and registered by MMV and partners thus offering a much-needed diversity of medicines for children; tafenoquine, which is being developed as a single-dose antirelapse agent for *P. vivax* and has moved to large-scale phase 3 trials, with major implications for Southeast Asia; and two potential single dose cures for blood-stage malaria that also demonstrate promising transmission blocking activity (OZ439 and KAE609).

Likewise, with AusAID's support in 2012-2013, the TB Alliance made ground-breaking progress, having completed clinical development for the first new, treatment-shortening regimen for drug-sensitive TB in 4 decades (REMox), and having advanced to Phase 3 development a shortened treatment that is effective against both drug-sensitive and drug-resistant TB (PaMZ). We have collectively amassed the largest tuberculosis and malaria pipelines in history. The new and improved treatments we are developing hold the potential to dramatically transform the treatment landscape for TB and malaria, saving lives while dramatically improving health systems efficiency with near-term impact in Australia and across the Asia Pacific region.

The funding provided to PDPs under the Medical Research Strategy, while a relatively small portion of Australia's overall aid commitments, is critical in accelerating the delivery of new antimalarial and TB products. It underpins economic growth, supports Australia's trade and development commitments, and positions Australian researchers to play a leading role in spearheading scientific innovation. We jointly urge the Australian government to continue its investment in this important research, which is on the brink of transforming the treatment landscape for these devastating diseases.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. David Reddy, CEO
Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV)

Dr. Melvin Spigelman, President and CEO
Global Alliance for TB Drug Development
(TB Alliance)