A DECADE OF R&D FOR NEGLECTED DISEASES IN AFRICA

Endemic Country Research and Development for Patient Access

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME
Speakers & Chairs
A DECADE OF R&D FOR NEGLECTED DISEASES IN AFRICA

5 June 2013

Opening Session

8:45
Opening Address
Dr Monique Wasunna, Assistant Director Research KEMRI and Head of DNDi Africa

9:45
Welcoming Remarks
Dr Solomon Mpoke, Director, KEMRI
Prof. Marcel Tanner, Director, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute & Chair, DNDi Board of Directors
Dr Evans Kidero, Governor, Nairobi City, County of Nairobi, Kenya
Hon. Mr James Macharia, Cabinet Secretary of Health, Kenya

A Decade of Innovative Partnerships in Africa for Excellence in Neglected Disease Research

9:45
Chair and Opening Remarks:
A Decade of Partnerships and Initiatives: Lessons Learned
Dr Charles Mgone, Executive Director, EDCTP

From Clinical Trials to widespread Access: Implementation of NECT Treatment / Human African Trypanosomiasis Platform
Dr Augustin Kadima Ebeja, Coordinator of the HAT Platform

Sharing of Expertise and Capacity Strengthening to Deliver a New Firstline Treatment for Kala Azar in East Africa / LEAP Platform
Dr Ahmed Musa Mudawi, Institute of Endemic Diseases, University of Khartoum, Sudan

Building a Global Partnership to Bring a New Vaccine to Patients: MenAfriVac, PATH-WHO
Dr Mamoudou Djingarey, MVP focal point and coordinator for vaccine introduction, Meningitis Vaccine Project (MVP) partnership between WHO and PATH

Risk Management Plan for ACTs: The Case of ASAQ for Malaria
Dr François Bompart, Vice President, Deputy Head & Medical Director, Access to Medicines Sanofi

African Network for Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation (ANDI) - Building a Network of Excellence for health innovation in Africa
Dr Solomon Nwaka, Acting Director, African Network for Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation (ANDI)

11:00
BREAK

11:00
11:30
## Reflections on a Decade of Innovation in Africa

**Chair:** Dr Monique Wasunna, Assistant Director of Research KEMRI and Head of DNDi Africa

**Creating and Sustaining an Enabling R&D Environment in Africa:** Dr Charles Mgome, Executive Director, EDCTP

**Where do We Stand with Drug Development for Neglected Diseases? Lessons Learned from DNDi’s Decade of R&D:**

**Dr Bernard Pécoul,** Executive Director, Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi)

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## Strategies for Neglected Diseases: What Roadblocks Need To Be Overcome to Deliver the Right Tools for Elimination?

**Chair:** Dr Els Torreele, Director, Access to Essential Medicines Initiative, Open Society Foundations

**Keynote address:** Control and Elimination of NTDs: The Need for Broad-Based Support on Multiple Fronts

**Dr Margaret Chan,** Director, WHO via video

**Introductory Remarks:**

Dr Pere Simarro, Medical Officer in charge of the WHO human African trypanosomiasis programme, Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases, Innovative and Intensified Disease Management, World Health Organization

**Dr Grace Murilla,** Deputy Director of Research, Kenya Trypanosomiasis Research Institute

**Prof. Marleen Boelaert,** Epidemiology & Disease Control Unit, Department of Public Health, Prince Leopold Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp, Belgium

**Panel and Audience Discussion:**

**The Ambition to Eliminate Sleeping Sickness**

**Dr Crispin Lumbala,** Director, Human African Trypanosomiasis National Control Programme, Ministry of Health, Democratic Republic of the Congo

**Dr Unni Karunakara,** International President, Médecins Sans Frontières

**Prof. Théophile Josenando,** Director, Trypanosomiasis Fight and Control Institute (ICCT), Angola

**Dr Bernard Pécoul,** Executive Director, Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative
Global Challenges for Elimination of Neglected Diseases

Chair
Prof. Hannah Akuffo, Chairperson of General Assembly, EDCTP, Sweden

Elimination of HIV: Why We are Not Reaching the Mark for Children
Dr Tom Ellman, Director of MSF SAMU, South Africa Medical Unit, South Africa

Improving and Maintaining Clinical Research Capacity in Remote Settings: Timely Delivery of Health Tools
Dr Wilfred Mbacham, Associate Professor, Biotechnology Centre, Cameroon

Regional Centres of Regulatory Excellence (RCOREs) in Africa
Dr Margareth Ndomondo-Sigonda, Medicines Regulatory Harmonization (AMRH) Programme Coordinator, NEPAD Agency

Future Perspectives: The Road Ahead for Neglected Disease R&D in and for Africa

Chair
Dr Konji Sebati, Director, Department of Traditional Knowledge and Global Challenges, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

Panel Discussion
Hon. Mr Ajuide Soumouk, Minister of Health, Central African Republic
Dr Lomamy Kalema Shodu, Medical Advisor to the Ministry of Health, DRC
Hon. Dr Musa Bashir Musa, Gedarif State Minister of Health, Republic of Sudan

Closing Remarks
Prof. Marcel Tanner, Director, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute & Chair, DNDi Board of Directors

GET TOGETHER DINNER
Opening Session

Dr Monique Wasunna
Assistant Director, Research, KEMRI & Head of DNDi Africa, Kenya

Dr Wasunna is a physician and an infectious disease and tropical medicine specialist. She holds a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery degree from the University of Nairobi. Her postgraduate training in medicine was sponsored by WHO-TDR at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, University of London, where she obtained an MSc and a PhD in medicine and a diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene from the Royal College of Physicians of London. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, a member of the Kenya Medical Association and Kenya Association of Physicians.

Dr Wasunna was appointed by the Director General, UNESCO, as a member of the International Bioethics Committee (IBC), a position she holds to date.

Dr Wasunna’s research interest is primarily focused on clinical trials in visceral leishmaniasis, malaria, and HIV. She is the founding Chairperson of the Leishmaniasis East Africa Platform (LEAP). LEAP is a clinical research platform that brings together scientists and institutions in East Africa to develop clinical trial capacity to bring new treatment options to neglected visceral leishmaniasis patients in the region. Dr Wasunna co-ordinates all LEAP activities in the region supported by DNDi.

Dr Solomon Mpoke BSc, PhD, IoD(K), MBS
Director KEMRI, Kenya

Dr Solomon Mpoke is the Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI). He attained a Bachelor of Science degree, specializing in Chemistry and Biochemistry from the University of Nairobi and thereafter enrolled at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut in USA, for a PhD in Cell Biology, which he obtained in 1996, before proceeding for post-doctoral studies at the University of California at San Francisco, USA.

During his PhD graduate years, Dr Mpoke developed the unicellular protozoan, *Tetrahymena thermophila*, as a model to study the process of apoptosis in a living cell. As a post-doctoral student at the University of California, San Francisco, Dr Mpoke carried out work on structural and functional relationships of purine salvage enzymes as drug targets for control of Trichomonas foetus parasites. His research interests are in biomedical sciences, specializing in immunology and molecular epidemiology of HIV/AIDS.

Dr Mpoke joined KEMRI in 1998 where he served in various capacities as a research Scientist before appointment as Director and Chief Executive Officer of KEMRI in 2010. As the Executive Chief Officer of the Institute, he provides oversight for sustained collaboration between KEMRI and various local and international partners, including CDC, the Walter Reed project, Oxford/Welcome Trust research programme, and Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi), as well as ensuring effective implementation of research and training programmes between KEMRI and various local and International Universities.
Prof. Marcel Tanner
Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH - formerly STI),
Chair of the DNDi Board of Directors, Switzerland

Marcel Tanner obtained a PhD in medical biology from the University of Basel and a MPH from the University of London. He is Director of the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (formerly the Swiss Tropical Institute) and Professor of Epidemiology and Medical Parasitology at the University of Basel and at the Federal Institute of Technology.

Since 1977, his research has ranged from basic research on the cell biology and immunology of malaria, schistosomiasis, trypanosomiasis, and filariasis to epidemiological and public health research on risk assessment, vulnerability, health impact and district health planning. His research, teaching and health planning expertise are based on long term experience working in rural and urban areas in Africa (mainly Tanzania, Chad, Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire) and Asia (China, Thailand, Laos).

He was co-investigator and coordinator of the first African malaria vaccine trial in 1992 and has participated since then in several major intervention trials on malaria (iron supplementation, intermittent preventive treatment) and schistosomiasis. He has published over 400 original research papers as well as numerous book chapters and reviews.

Prof. Tanner is also advisor on communicable diseases research and control, health systems strengthening, and capacity building to various national and international agencies/bodies and in boards/committees such as WHO/STAC-TDR, DNDi, CHNRI, INCLEN-Trust.

A Decade of Innovative Partnerships in Africa for Excellence in Neglected Disease Research

Dr Augustin Ebeja Kadima, Africa HAT Platform Coordinator, DNDi, Democratic Republic of Congo

Dr Kadima joined DNDi in August 2006 as the Coordinator of the HAT Platform, a clinical trial capacity strengthening initiative, based in Kinshasa, DRC.

Prior to joining DNDi, Dr Kadima worked in the Ivory Coast with MSF-Belgium, where he was responsible for the Bangolo-Kouibly project (two dispensaries and five mobile teams) and the Medicine Department at the Regional Hospital of Man.

Before working as a consultant with GTZ (German Development Cooperation in DRC), he was first a provincial and later the national coordinator for MSF-Belgium’s human African trypanosomiasis project. His experience also notably includes serving as the Chief of two health districts and the Director of a rural hospital in DRC. Dr Kadima received his MD from the University of Kinshasa (ex Lovanium) and completed a master’s degree in Disease Control at the University of Antwerp in Belgium.
Dr Ahmed Musa Mudawi  
**Department of Immunology and Clinical Pathology, Institute of Endemic Diseases, University of Khartoum, Sudan**

Ahmed Mudawi Musa, Assistant Professor at the Institute of Endemic Diseases (IEND), University of Khartoum, is a specialist in immunology, tropical medicine practice and research. He has headed the leishmaniasis research group of the IEND since 2004. Dr Musa is an expert on post kala-azar dermal leishmaniasis (PKDL), leishmaniasis immunochemotherapy, and therapeutic leishmaniasis vaccine studies. He has led the IEND team to Western Sudan (Darfur), Southern Sudan (Bantiu) and Eastern Sudan (Kassala), and is the principal investigator for DNDi at the treatment centres in Kassab and Dooka, and advises the Gedaref State Ministry of Health and DNDi. Dr Musa is also a WHO/TDR temporary advisor for clinical trials and the current chair of the Leishmaniasis East Africa Platform (LEAP).

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Dr Mamoudou Harouna Djingarey  
**Coordinator Meningitis Vaccine Project (MVP) at WHO/AFRO, Burkina Faso**

Mamadou Djingarey is currently the Coordinator of the Meningitis Vaccine Project (MVP), a partnership between WHO and PATH with the objective of eliminating epidemic meningitis as a public health importance problem in Sub-Saharan Africa through the development, testing, licensure and widespread use of conjugate meningococcal vaccines. He supported the appropriate implementation of clinical studies for licensure and post-licensure of the newly developed meningococcal A conjugate vaccine in the African pilot demonstration countries. Dr Djingarey supports the appropriate regulatory activities for the introduction of the conjugate vaccine in Sub-Saharan Africa, and he coordinates the strategies and plans for the introduction of the new conjugate vaccine in Africa, as well as meningitis surveillance activities for vaccine efficacy and impact assessment.

From 2004 to 2009 Dr Djingarey was in charge of the epidemiology unit at the WHO-Multi-Disease Surveillance Centre (MDSC) in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. He designed and conducted applied research aimed at enhancing integrated meningococcal disease surveillance and response implementation in the African meningitis belt countries. When Dr Djingarey joined WHO in March 2002, as an inter-country epidemiologist at the MDSC, he supported the implementation of Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, and Mali. Earlier positions include Medical Officer and Director of the national health information system for the Ministry of Public Health in Niger. Dr Djingarey also provides training to health personnel involved in epidemiology, operational research, epidemic preparedness and response, immunization, health communication and education.

He earned his Doctoral degree in Medicine from the University Abdou Moumouni in Niamey (Niger) and his Master of Public Health from the University of California Los Angeles (USA).
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Dr François Bompart
Vice-President, Deputy Head and Medical Director of Sanofi’s Access to Medicines department, France

Dr François Bompart trained in clinical pharmacology at University College Hospital, London (UK) and at Hôpital Cochin, Paris (France). From 1991 to 1997, he held various positions at Rhône Poulenc Rorer in the clinical development of antibiotics, including a 5-year assignment in the USA. In 1998, he joined the vaccines division of the Rhône Poulenc group (which became Sanofi-Pasteur) in Lyon (France), as VP Medical Affairs for the International area, then VP Global Medical Affairs.

He joined Sanofi’s Access to Medicines team in Paris in January 2006. This department brings together the Sanofi Group’s areas of expertise to address the challenge of access to healthcare in developing and emerging countries for specific diseases: malaria, tuberculosis, sleeping sickness, leishmaniasis, mental illnesses, and epilepsy.

Dr Solomon Nwaka
Acting Director, African Network for Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation (ANDI), Ethiopia

Solomon Nwaka’s scientific and management career spans different academic and public institutions, biopharmaceutical industry, product development partnerships, and international organizations, in several countries including Nigeria, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Japan, USA, Canada and Switzerland.

Dr Nwaka is presently the interim Director of ANDI – African Network for Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation, which he helped to conceive at the Special Programme for Research and Training in Topical Diseases, World Health Organization (WHO/TDR). He also headed drug discovery for infectious tropical diseases as well as product R&D and innovation in developing countries at WHO/TDR. Prior to joining WHO, he served as Director of drug discovery and innovation at the Medicines for Malaria Venture, and in other organizations around the world. He has published widely on global health, product R&D, public-private partnerships, networks, access to medicines, as well as capacity building in developing countries.
Reflections on a Decade of Innovation in Africa

Prof. Charles Mgone
Executive Director of the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP), South Africa

Charles Mgone is a paediatrician by training and holds a PhD degree in Medical and Molecular Genetics. He has worked in Africa, Europe, and the Pacific where he has served as advisor at national and international levels. He has considerable experience in research, research administration, capacity development and training, particularly in sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other tropical diseases. Prior to the current position, Prof. Mgone was the Head of the EDCTP Africa Office working closely with the African research community, programme managers, and policy makers in inspiring the African commitment and ownership of the EDCTP programme. His special interest is in the development of sustainable capacity and appropriate environment for research and development of tools against diseases due to poverty.

Dr Bernard Pécoul
Executive Director, DNDi

Bernard Pécoul has led the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) since its foundation in 2003. Under his guidance, DNDi – a not-for-profit research and development organization – and its partners have built the largest-ever R&D portfolio for kinetoplastid diseases (leishmaniasis, sleeping sickness, and Chagas disease) as well as developing treatments for malaria. In 2011, DNDi extended the scope of its portfolio to include filarial diseases and paediatric HIV. Since its inception, DNDi has delivered six new treatments through partnerships with public and private organizations worldwide, and aims to deliver a total of 11 to 13 new field-adapted treatments for neglected diseases by 2018.

Prior to DNDi, Dr Pécoul was Director of the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines from 1998 to 2003, a position he took on after that of Executive Director of MSF-France. While working with MSF, Dr Pécoul carried out field missions in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. In 1988, he co-founded Epicentre, an MSF-affiliated NGO specialized in epidemiology.

After obtaining his medical degree at the University of Clermont-Ferrand, France, Dr Pécoul earned a master’s degree in public health at Tulane University, USA. In 2012, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws Degree by the University of Dundee, UK.

Bernard Pécoul is member of the Joint Coordination Board of the Special Programme for Tropical Disease Research (WHO/TDR) and a board member of UNITAID’s Medicines Patent Pool Initiative.
Strategies for Neglected Diseases: What Roadblocks Need to Be Overcome to Deliver the Right Tools for Elimination?

Els Torreele, PhD
Director, Access to Essential Medicines Initiative, Open Society Foundations, USA

Els Torreele is the director of the Open Society Public Health Program’s Access to Essential Medicines Initiative. She graduated as a bioengineer and obtained a PhD in applied biological sciences from the Free University Brussels. As a research and development coordinator at the Flanders Interuniversity Institute for Biotechnology, she worked on policy issues related to biomedical research agenda-setting, patenting of research findings, and the commercialization of biotechnology research.

Ms Torreele joined the Médecins Sans Frontières Access to Essential Medicines Campaign in its pioneering years as chair of the Drugs for Neglected Diseases Working Group, a think tank aimed at bringing new ideas to foster needs-driven research and development of treatments for diseases that primarily affect developing countries. A key outcome of this group was the creation in 2003 of the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi), a non-profit drug development organization which she joined as a founding team member. At DNDi, Torreele was responsible for several research and development projects from discovery through clinical trials, including capacity strengthening for research in endemic countries, and international advocacy for increased research and development for neglected diseases.

She joined OSF in 2009 to lead their Access to Medicines work, focusing on advancing health and human rights through social inclusion, transparency, accountability, and participation and supporting civil society voices in national, regional and global policy making that shapes access to medicines and biomedical innovation.

Dr Pere Perez Simarro
Medical Officer in Charge of the human African trypanosomiasis control programme, WHO, Switzerland

Pere Simarro is in charge of the human African trypanosomiasis control programme in the Department of Neglected Tropical Diseases at the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva since 2005. Prior to this, he was the Medical officer and Public health specialist at the WHO country office in Cameroon, providing first line support to diseases endemic countries.

Dr Simarro was the founder and director of the sleeping sickness control Centre in Bata, Equatorial Guinea, where he was also involved in the postgraduate training programme for both medical doctors and nurses. Dr Simarro has been the Technical Adviser to several NGO’s working in the field of HAT. He has over 25 years of professional experience in various African countries; managing major control programmes such as HAT, TB, leprosy, and schistosomiasis.

Dr Simarro’s current challenge is to ensure appropriate technical and financial support to national control programmes in Africa and to enhance control and surveillance activities in these countries. He is also involved in improving access to diagnosis and treatments of people infected with HAT and improving knowledge of the epidemiological status of HAT in all endemic areas. He has co-authored numerous books and chapters on the subject of human African trypanosomiasis and tropical medicines and has also been involved in the production of several documentaries on HAT in Africa.
Dr Grace Murilla  
Deputy Director of Research, Kenya Trypanosomiasis Research Institute

Dr Grace Murilla has undertaken pharmacokinetic evaluation of current trypanocidal drugs; investigated vet drug residues as a public health and trade concern; has extensive experience in QA/QC of food & drugs; and has participated in building capacity of scientific staff at TRC and in the region in the basics of antigen/antibody interactions. She is member of the North-Carolina-led Consortium for Parasitic Drug Development researching into 'Novel Approaches to the development of drugs for the treatment of sleeping sickness and leishmaniasis’ and spearheaded the consortium of several African Countries on research capacity strengthening in Africa for human African Trypanosomiasis. As the Consortium Coordinator, Dr Murilla leads training of field extension personnel and researchers. She also supervises students in the Yale University School of Public Health-led program supported by US National Institutes for Health (NIH) on capacity strengthening of researchers in eastern and central Africa in T&T.

For over 10 years, Dr Murilla has been at the forefront in Africa in championing good research practices among biomedical researchers and significantly contributed to the development of several training manuals in good practices. She is a member of the WHO/TDR Africa GLP Network, has organized several courses on GLP, GCP and Ethics, Clinical Monitors and Effective Project Planning and Evaluation (EPPE) for Health Research in several countries.

Dr Marleen Boelaert  
Professor and Head of the Department of Public Health of the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) in Antwerp, Belgium

Marleen Boelaert graduated as an MD from the Catholic University of Louvain in 1985 and gained experience in international health working with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) between 1986 and 1994. She was president of the Board of Médecins sans Frontières in Brussels between 1995 and 1998. After training in epidemiology and statistics, she joined ITM in 1994. In 1999 she obtained a PhD degree with a thesis on the use of latent class analysis in the evaluation of diagnostics for visceral leishmaniasis.

Her research concentrates on control strategies for neglected tropical diseases, mainly leishmaniasis and sleeping sickness. She has (co-)authored close to 200 papers in this field. She teaches epidemiology and biostatistics in various courses of ITM and is actively involved in curriculum review and development. Marleen Boelaert coordinates two programmes for research capacity strengthening, one in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo with the Institut National de Recherche Biomédicale and one at the BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences, Dharan, Nepal.
Dr Crispin Lumbala
Director, Human African Trypanosomiasis National Control Programme, Ministry of Health, Democratic Republic of Congo

Dr Crispin Lumbala earned his medical degree in 1998 from Lubumbashi University in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and then pursued a Master’s degree in public health, specializing in disease control from the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, Belgium.

Dr Lumbala is currently the Director of the Human African Trypanosomiasis National Control Programme (PNLTHA), Ministry of Health, Democratic Republic of the Congo. He began working at the programme in 2006 as provincial medical coordinator for the East Kasai province, a position he held until earlier this year. Before joining the PNLTHA, Dr Lumbala served as a medical director of a rural hospital in Ngandajika, in East Kasai, and then as medical chief of a health zone in a rural area in the same province.

Dr Lumbala has worked in clinical research for sleeping sickness, notably with DNDi and Swiss TPH as part of the NECT-FIELD study in East Kasai. He has also served as investigator for several sleeping sickness diagnostic studies with FIND.

Dr Unni Karunakara
International President, Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), Switzerland

Unni Krishnan Karunakara was appointed International President of MSF in June 2010. He first joined MSF in 1995, when he set up a tuberculosis control programme in Jijiga, Ethiopia. He went on to become Medical Coordinator for MSF’s activities in Azerbaijan, providing basic health care services to forced migrants from Nagorno-Karabakh in the South Caucasus, to the indigenous population of the Amazonas province in Brazil, and for a sleeping sickness programme in the Republic of Congo.

In 2002, Dr Karunakara joined the Public Health Department of MSF in Amsterdam, advising country programmes in the Middle East, southern Africa and South and Central America, and three years later became Medical Director of MSF’s Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines. In 2007, he was part of the medical emergency response team that treated victims of cyclone Sidr in Mathbaria, Bangladesh.

Dr Karunakara received his medical degree from Kasturba Medical College in India, and has been awarded degrees in public health from Yale and Johns Hopkins Universities in the United States. He has held various academic and research fellowships at universities in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Germany, and the United Kingdom, focusing on the demography of forced migration and the delivery of health care to neglected populations affected by conflict, disasters and epidemics. Since 2008, Dr Karunakara has worked at Columbia University, USA, as Deputy Director of Health for the Millennium Villages Project at the Earth Institute, and is an Assistant Clinical Professor at the Mailman School of Public Health.
Global Challenges for Elimination of Neglected Diseases

Prof. Hannah Akuffo  
Chairperson, General Assembly, EDCTP, Sweden

Hannah Akuffo is head of division for the division for university support and national research development (UNI) at SAREC. She is also an adjunct professor of parasitology at the Karolinska Institute. She was born in Ghana, West Africa, and pursued her education in Ghana and the UK. Her research training was in the field of immunology of leprosy and she moved on in her postdoctoral years to research on the mechanisms of resistance to the infections caused by the parasite Leishmania sp. Her contributions in this field include showing the importance of innate/natural immunity to leishmaniasis in humans, the quest for the identification of surrogate markers of immunity to leishmaniasis, which is a prerequisite for adequate follow-up of candidate anti-leishmaniasis vaccine candidates, and the consequences of co-infection with HIV and Leishmania infection. Her research also included studies to develop an affordable tool for diagnosis of the causative agent of river blindness. She is currently involved in a study aiming to find a method for improving the efficacy of the anti-tuberculosis vaccine, BCG in low income countries through deworming.

She has supervised PhD candidates from Ethiopia, Sudan, Sweden, Guatemala, Somalia, Germany and Sweden, and has collaborated with scientists in Sweden, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Ghana, USA, Uzbekistan, Iran etc. Over the last 12 years Prof. Akkuffo has served in various research steering committees of the World Bank/UNDP/WHO Special programme on Tropical Disease Research and Training (TDR). For 5 years she served as the chairperson of the Research Strengthening Group of TDR.

As a representative of SIDA, she currently serves as the chairperson of the European Malaria Vaccine Initiative (EMVI) and is the Swedish representative on the Assembly of the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Programme (EDCTP), where she is currently chairperson of the general assembly.

Dr Tom Ellman  
Director of MSF SAMU, South Africa Medical Unit, South Africa

Tom Ellman is a medical doctor and epidemiologist, with a particular focus on tropical and infectious diseases, notably malaria, tuberculosis, HIV, and Chagas disease. He was previously the MSF Chagas programme coordinator in Bolivia for three years, where he collaborated closely with DNDi, among others.

Dr Ellman first joined MSF in Rwanda 1995, and subsequently worked between the UK, including the Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London, and field missions and evaluations for MSF in Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Cambodia.

Dr Ellman has given extensive support to monitoring and coaching in HIV/AIDS programmes and has worked in the area of innovation in health interventions, particularly the definition and implementation of monitoring and operational research within MSF’s AIDS, malaria, and TB programmes.

He is currently director of MSF South Africa’s Medical Unit, based in Cape Town, which supports MSF HIV/TB projects with technical/strategic, training, and operational research support.
Dr Wilfried Mbacham  
**Programme Coordinator, Medicines Regulatory Harmonization (AMRH), NEPAD Agency, South Africa**

Wilfred F. Mbacham has been a researcher in the field of molecular parasitology for the past 16 years amidst difficult circumstances in Cameroon, Africa. His work started off in the biochemistry and immunochemistry of filariasis and extended into molecular biology of *Plasmodium* sp. He graduated from the Harvard School of Public Health in 1997, with a Science Doctorate in tropical public health. He founded the laboratory for public health biotechnology (LPHB) at the biotechnology centre of the University of Yaounde, Cameroon, and has contributed scientifically to the profiling of the molecular epidemiology of drug resistance in Cameroon and Africa.

His laboratory is the reference centre for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the training of other Africans for the use of radioisotopes in the surveillance of drug resistant TB and malaria, and he has set up two further laboratories in Sudan and Burkina Faso. He coordinated the Anti-malaria Drug resistance network of the Multilateral Initiative on Malaria at TDR, WHO that grouped 5 countries in Africa. His laboratory has recently been assisting other regional initiatives in molecular epidemiology and cloning of parasite genes from *Onchocerca volvulus* and lately from malaria (student from Mali under training). His laboratory won the Gates Malaria Partnership grant through the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in 2003 to establish the efficacy of currently used anti-malaria drugs in Cameroon and it is completing studies on the safety and efficacy of artemisinine-based combination drugs. Dr Mbacham, is the Founder and President of the Fobang Foundation.

Dr Margareth Ndomondo-Sigonda  
**Programme Coordinator, Medicines Regulatory Harmonization (AMRH), NEPAD Agency, South Africa**

Dr Margareth Ndombo-Sigonda leads the African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization (AMRH) Programme, which operationalizes the African Union’s Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa (PMPA) that seeks to enable African countries to fulfill their national obligations to provide all citizens with safe, high-quality, and efficacious essential medicines.

The NEPAD Agency - as the technical arm of the African Union and in collaboration with partners - is working through the AMRH Programme, to support African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and countries to lead medicines regulatory harmonization in their respective countries and to respond to the challenges of increasing access to essential medicines.

Dr Ndomondo-Sigonda was previously Director General for the Food and Drug Authority in Tanzania.
Future Perspectives:
The Road Ahead for Neglected Disease R&D in and for Africa

Ambassador Dr Konji Sebati
Director of the Department of Traditional Knowledge and Global Challenges at the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), South Africa

Konji Sebati is a former Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to Switzerland, The Vatican and Liechtenstein; and most recently to France, UNESCO and the OECD. A medical practitioner by training, a degree conferred in Kenya, she also obtained a Diploma in Paediatrics and a Diploma in Public Health Planning, Health Services Management and Hospital Administration.

Dr Sebati practised as a medical practitioner in Kenya, and in South Africa. She was appointed Regional Director for Health and a Hospital Administrator in Pretoria, South Africa. She then joined the pharmaceutical industry, first with Roche Pharmaceuticals as a Medical Advisor and with Pfizer Pharmaceuticals in South Africa and in the New York Pfizer Headquarters, where her career spanned from Medical Director in charge of Clinical Research, Product registration, Safety and Pharmacovigilance, Quality Assurance, and Sales force training, to Medical and Corporate Affairs Director, to Public Affairs Director for Africa and Middle East, and Corporate Affairs Director in the Philanthropy Department, to be in charge of Pfizer’s HIV/AIDS Philanthropy programmes worldwide.

She launched Pfizer’s flagship programme: the Diflucan Partnership Programme, donating free medicine, Diflucan, for the treatment of HIV/AIDS associated opportunistic infections to governments and non-governmental organizations worldwide. In 2004, she received a recognition award from the Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric Foundation as ‘The Most Outstanding Woman in the Fight against HIV/AIDS’, and later that year she was awarded the recognition of ‘Africa Businesswoman of the Year 2004’ by Africa Investor, in recognition of her role in the corporate world as an advocate for better health care and management in Africa.