OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

• To provide an overview of visceral leishmaniasis (VL) and the current epidemiological trends, including geographic variability, co-infection with HIV, and the post-kala-azar dermal leishmaniasis (PKDL) syndrome.
• To provide an extensive overview of the holistic and coordinated strategy to address the current R&D needs to combat VL in Africa.
• To show the challenges of ensuring that research results lead to appropriate policies for the effective control of leishmaniasis in the region. A concrete example of the clinical trials conducted for the combination treatment Sodium Stibogluconate (SSG) & Paromomycin (PM) will be given.
• To highlight the need for strengthening national and regional clinical research capacities in order to facilitate the development, delivery, and registration of new treatments for leishmaniasis. Here, the activities of the Leishmaniasis East Africa Platform (LEAP) will be introduced.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

• Overview on the strengths of a global and holistic approach to address R&D gaps for visceral leishmaniasis.
• Stimulate discussion on the R&D activities to combat visceral leishmaniasis and to reach the WHO NTDs Roadmap targets.
Combating neglected tropical diseases: THE CASE OF VISCERAL LEISHMANIASIS IN AFRICA

Chair: Daniel Argaw Dagne, Leishmaniasis Programme, Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases, WHO

17:00 Introduction and welcome
Daniel Argaw Dagne, Leishmaniasis Programme, Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases, WHO

17:05 A global approach to combat visceral leishmaniasis
Dr Jorge Alvar, Head of Leishmaniasis Clinical Program, DNDi
The presentation introduces DNDi’s global coordinated strategy to cover the current R&D gaps of treatment and control of the human transmission of Visceral Leishmaniasis through innovative mechanisms.

17:20 Translation of science into policy of new control tools for the management of African visceral leishmaniasis
Dr. Nathalie Strub-Wourgaft, Medical Director, DNDi
The presentation will introduce the pre-requests and the barriers that must be overcome in order to acquire approvals and achieve international standards when conducting clinical trials. It will provide a case-study of the combination treatment SSG&PM developed by DNDi and its partners to fight visceral leishmaniasis in East Africa.

17:35 Capacity strengthening to deliver a new first-line treatment for Kala Azar in East Africa: the leading role of the LEAP platform
Dr Monique Wasunna, Head of DNDi Africa
The presentation will provide an overview of the role of the LEAP Platform in building and retaining clinical trial capacities within disease-endemic countries and how such research networks can facilitate registration of and access to new treatments.

17:50 Open discussion
Daniel Argaw Dagne, Leishmaniasis Programme, Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases, WHO

18:25 Summary and ending conclusions
Chair: Daniel Argaw Dagne, Leishmaniasis Programme, Department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases, WHO

The Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) is a collaborative, patients’ needs-driven, non-profit drug research and development (R&D) organization that is developing new treatments for neglected diseases such as leishmaniasis and sleeping sickness. Working in partnership with a range of public-and private-sector actors in neglected disease-endemic countries and around the world, DNDi and its partners have built the largest ever R&D portfolio for the kinetoplastid diseases (Chagas disease, sleeping sickness, and leishmaniasis) and have currently underway four projects in the research phase, eleven projects in translation phase, five projects in development phase, and six projects in implementation.