

Monday, November 20, 2006

IPM Lauds the Netherlands for Renewed Commitment to Developing Tools to Protect Women from HIV

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs Announces €12 Million (US\$15.2 Million) Grant to the International Partnership for Microbicides

Contact:

Annmarie Leadman: 301-608-2221, aleadman@ipm-microbicides.org

SILVER SPRING, MD (20 November 2006) – The International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM) commends the government of the Netherlands for its leadership in the global effort to develop microbicides to protect women in developing countries from HIV infection. The Netherlands, on 2 November, announced renewed commitment of €12 million (US\$15.2 million) over four years.

“We are grateful to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their strong expression of support,” said Dr. Zeda Rosenberg, IPM’s Chief Executive Officer. “The Dutch have been a longtime and steadfast donor to IPM and this new program grant will enable IPM to accelerate the development and clinical testing of microbicides that have the potential to save millions of lives.”

IPM is a non-profit product development partnership established in 2002 to prevent HIV transmission by accelerating the development and availability of a safe and effective microbicide for use by women in developing countries.

"We are pleased to provide increased support for the important development of microbicides that help women in developing countries protect themselves from HIV," said Agnes van Ardenne, the Netherlands' Minister for Development Cooperation. "These funds will also help build research capacity throughout Africa, which we believe is a critical component of Dutch foreign assistance."

Poverty and social and economic inequality have left women in many societies to bear the brunt of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), there are more than 17 million women infected with HIV, three-quarters of them are living in sub-Saharan Africa. An HIV-prevention option women can initiate is urgently needed.

Microbicides are vaginal products being developed to reduce the transmission of HIV during sexual intercourse. A microbicide could take the form of a gel, cream, film, suppository or sponge, or be contained in a vaginal ring that releases the active ingredient gradually. A microbicide could also be in a new formulation and use a delivery method yet to be invented.

“Microbicides represent one of the most promising new prevention technologies to combat the spread of HIV,” said Dr. Els Borst-Eilers, the former Netherlands’ Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport and former Deputy Prime Minister. “As Chair of IPM’s Board of Directors, I am especially pleased that my government continues to be a leader in the development of HIV-prevention tools specifically designed to empower women to protect themselves.”

This second grant to IPM from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs will support preclinical work necessary to analyze promising microbicide candidates as well as the conduct of clinical trials of viable microbicide candidates, including safety, expanded safety, and large-scale efficacy testing.

“The Netherlands is a leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS,” said Ton Coenen, the Executive Director of the Dutch Aids Fonds, a Netherlands’ based non-governmental organization. “This support for new prevention technologies such as microbicides demonstrates the Netherlands’ commitment to a comprehensive and integrated response to HIV/AIDS.”

###

About IPM

IPM was established in 2002 to accelerate the development and accessibility of microbicides to prevent the transmission of HIV in women. By screening compounds, designing optimal formulations, establishing manufacturing capacity, developing trial sites and conducting clinical trials, the organization works to improve the efficiency of all efforts to develop and deliver safe and effective microbicides as soon as possible. For more information, visit www.ipm-microbicides.org.