

Press Release

The Hague, 3 December 2009

Professor Hannah Akuffo succeeds Dr Diana Dunstan as Chair of EDCTP General Assembly

The members of the General Assembly of the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) have elected Professor Hannah Akuffo as its Chair as of 1 January 2010. Prof. Akuffo succeeds Dr Diana Dunstan, who has chaired the Assembly between 2006 and 2009. Dr Gabriele Hausdorf was appointed and Professor Patrice Debré re-appointed as vice-Chair.

Professor Hannah Akuffo has a proven track record in research on the immunology of poverty-related diseases and has extensive experience with Euro-African research cooperation and funding. Prof. Akuffo was born in Ghana, trained in Ghana and the UK, and worked in among others Ethiopia and Uganda. She is currently Head of team of the Research secretariat of the Swedish International Development cooperation Agency (SIDA), and is known as a passionate advocate of research capacity building in low income countries. Before being elected as Chair, Prof. Akuffo was a member of the General Assembly for Sweden.

"I am honoured and humbled to accept this position and encouraged by the great support from the GA members" said Prof. Akuffo. "I truly believe that partnership in health research is a key element to improve health in Africa. Over the years, it has been most fulfilling to see how the partnership has evolved positively. The Assembly unites 16 European countries which cooperate and partner, not only with each other, but also with African countries, public-private partnerships and other players. I look forward to my new role in further encouraging these partnerships."

Dr Diana Dunstan welcomed her successor and said "I congratulate Professor Akuffo with her position as Chair of the Assembly. It is a position that has great challenges and great rewards. In the last years, the Assembly has shown its commitment towards shaping a common agenda for clinical research on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and for that I wish to extend my thanks to all Assembly members. I am sure that EDCTP is ready for further success in the future."

"I extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Diana Dunstan for her commitment to EDCTP's governing body in the past four years" added Prof. Charles Mgone, EDCTP Executive Director. "It has been a privilege to work with Diana. I warmly welcome Hannah and look forward to work with her. The General Assembly, the policy making and supreme body of EDCTP, will greatly benefit from her experience and leadership."

About EDCTP

EDCTP aims to accelerate the development of new or improved drugs, vaccines, diagnostics and microbicides against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, with a focus on phase II and III clinical trials in sub-Saharan Africa. EDCTP funds multicentre projects which combine clinical trials, capacity building and networking. The aim of integrating these three activities is to develop the capacity to conduct clinical trials in sub-Saharan Africa in a sustainable way.

EDCTP is currently part of the European Commission's Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) for research and technological development, the European Union's main instrument for funding research in Europe.

About the EDCTP General Assembly

The basis of EDCTP is partnership. It unites 14 participating European Union (EU) Member States including Norway and Switzerland with sub-Saharan African countries. EDCTP is governed by the General Assembly (GA), in which all participating EU Member States are represented. It is the ultimate and exclusive decision making body of the European Economic Interest Group (EEIG-EDCTP), the legal entity for implementing the programme and managing the funding. The GA's Chairs and Vice-Chairs are elected every two years.

Note to the editor:

Bio Hannah Akuffo

Professor Hannah Akuffo is Head of team of the Research secretariat (SAREC) of the Swedish International Development cooperation Agency (SIDA). The division is responsible for research, research training and other research capacity strengthening support to 12 countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Bolivia, Honduras, Nicaragua, Laos, Sri Lanka and Vietnam).

From 1 January 2010, she will be the Chair of EDCTP's governing board, the General Assembly. In addition, she represents Sweden on the board of the European Vaccine Initiative (EVI), and is a member of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee of the Tropical Disease Research (TDR) programme based at the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva.

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