

Tamiflu Donation:

Virtual Handover to WHO

19 April 2006

Address by Franz B. Humer

Chairman and CEO

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very pleased to welcome you to this ceremony which marks the readiness of the global response stockpile which Roche pledged to the WHO. I am especially honored to welcome Dr LEE Jong-Wook, Director General of the WHO at today's event.

All of us have read a lot in the media about the potential for an influenza pandemic. The current outbreak of H5N1 in birds and fatalities in humans is intensifying global concern. The WHO is taking the lead in a number of key areas relating to pandemic preparedness, I am thinking of areas such as coordinating research, monitoring the spread of the virus or working with countries to contain any outbreak to name just a few. Roche is pleased to be able to support the WHO on some key aspects of pandemic preparedness. The partnership between Roche and WHO was established several years ago and together with leading scientists and physicians, WHO and Roche are working to get as much information as possible on how the virus evolves and how anti-viral medicines can be used optimally to combat a potential pandemic.

Roche has been in discussions with governments as early as 1997 regarding pandemic preparedness and in the last few years, has supplied Tamiflu to over 65 governments around the world for pandemic stockpiling. Clearly, anti-viral medicines like Tamiflu are an important component of any pandemic preparedness plan. To meet this demand, by working with third parties, Roche has substantially increased the production of Tamiflu and we will be in a position to produce 400 million treatments annually by the end of this year. In addition we have granted sub-licensing agreements to companies in China and India for production of oseltamivir.

During discussions with governments, it became clear that developing nations, particularly in the Far East where a pandemic is most likely to emerge, were the least prepared in terms of antiviral stockpiling. Subsequent discussions between Roche and WHO on this topic led to the concept of a rapid response stockpile of 3 million treatments. Roche pledged to provide this amount to the WHO and this stockpile is now prepared and ready to be utilized, 1.5 million treatments being stored here in Kaiseraugst and 1.5 million treatments stored in Nutley, US. The idea of such stock is to use the medicine as a fire blanket, to contain a pandemic where it starts. Mathematical modeling has shown that a stockpile of 3 million

treatments is sufficient to contain a pandemic at the site of the outbreak and stop the spread of disease if used early enough and in conjunction with quarantine and personal distancing measures. In addition, to the rapid response Roche and WHO discussed the set up of regional stockpiles. And earlier this year we pledged an additional 2 million treatments of Tamiflu to be stored at regional centres designated by the WHO, making a total donation of over 5 million treatment courses of Tamiflu.

Roche has also responded rapidly to the recent outbreak of avian influenza and has acted swiftly to ensure stocks have reached areas of high need. When Roche was informed about the outbreak of H5N1 in Turkey on a Thursday in early January, we expedited the Turkish government order and by end of day Friday, had 100'000 packs shipped to Istanbul airport, 36 hours after first being notified that such stocks may be needed. Taking action fast ensured that people involved in the culling of the birds could be protected and those infected with the virus be treated. The entire operation was conducted in close consultation with the WHO.

Pandemic preparedness is multi-faceted and actions need to be taken not only at a national level, there is also a need for private enterprise to work with WHO in areas such as increased surveillance of H5N1. We urge other companies to help in any way they can and get in contact with WHO. Clearly, everyone will benefit from the pandemic preparedness measures being put in place by WHO, so everyone should contribute and support the preparedness activities.

It is also important for corporations to have pandemic preparedness plans in place to ensure continuity of business in the event of a pandemic and Roche has such a plan, to ensure that, in the interest of patients, the company remains functional should a pandemic occur.

Back to the donation: the first 3 million treatments are now at the disposal of the WHO and I would like to handover the consignment to Dr Lee.