

Basel, 28 November 1997

**MabThera®: Hope for Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma Patients Thanks to Biotechnology**

In Switzerland, Roche has launched today MabThera® (rituximab), the first monoclonal antibody for the treatment of patients suffering from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. This ground-breaking new treatment has been possible with the help of biotechnology. MabThera® is administered on an outpatient basis. Four infusions are given one week apart. This contrasts with the current standard of treatment, chemotherapy, which is administered during four to six months.

Clinical Data presented to the Swiss regulatory body IKS showed that MabThera®, when used alone, induced tumor shrinkage of 58 percent or greater in 75 of 130 patients suffering from relapsed or chemoresistant follicular B-cell non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

MabThera® is currently being reviewed by the regulatory authorities of the European Union and other countries. On July 25, the FDA Advisory Board unanimously recommended marketing approval. The FDA has cleared the drug for marketing on November 26. IDEC Pharmaceuticals Corporation and Genentech Inc. will promote the drug in the US market under the name Rituxan™.

MabThera® has been discovered by IDEC Pharmaceuticals Corporation and was jointly developed by IDEC, Genentech, Inc., F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd of Switzerland and Zenyaku Kogyo Co. Ltd of Japan. Roche has currently marketing rights to MabThera® outside of the United States and Japan.

In Europe alone, there are approximately 120,000 patients with B-cell Non-Hodgkin's lymphomas, which are malignancies of the body's antibody-producing immune cells. Approximately 40% are follicular lymphoma patients who will experience multiple relapses during the average seven-year course of their incurable disease. Currently, standards of treatment consist of chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy, with their accompanying toxicity.