Basel, 4 December 2012

Roche and the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) partner to strengthen laboratories medicine training and knowledge on the African continent

Today Roche Diagnostics and the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) announced a public-private partnership to improve the capacity of laboratorians and strengthen laboratory systems in African nations highly impacted by HIV/AIDS. Valued at $12 million over five years, the goal of the partnership is to build institutional capacity of regional and national partners by developing certification programs for laboratory technicians, strengthening pre-service curricula, and institutionalizing quality improvement in diagnostics services.

“We are honoured that PEPFAR has partnered with us and we look forward to a successful working relationship. Our work with PEPFAR has demonstrated how the private sector can effectively apply its expertise to have a positive impact on healthcare in the regions most heavily burdened by diseases,” said Knut Seifert, country manager Roche Diagnostics South Africa.

The partnership between Roche and PEPFAR will accelerate the training of laboratorians specifically related to in-vitro diagnostics with the aim of strengthening laboratories and expanding the trained laboratory workforce. The PEPFAR contribution to the effort will be implemented through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a global leader in laboratory systems strengthening.

The five-year public-private partnership will focus on:

- Developing competency and certification for Laboratory Human Resources for Health.
- Developing pre-service training curricula.
- Quality improvement for laboratory services- including certification courses for pathologist, molecular diagnostics and quality management.
- Collaboration with the African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM) to strengthen local capacity and to promote country ownership and sustainability.
“Strengthening laboratory systems is a priority for PEPFAR because 50-70% of clinical decisions depend on accurate laboratory diagnosis. The dramatic scale-up of anti-retroviral treatment requires strengthening partner countries’ laboratory systems, molecular diagnostics and monitoring, and human resources. PEPFAR is pleased to partner with Roche to strengthen targeted laboratory systems and thereby advance HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care outcomes,” said Ambassador Eric Goosby, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator.

Today, according to UNAIDS, more than 8 million people in low- and middle-income countries are on antiretroviral treatment. PEPFAR directly supports nearly 4.5 million of these individuals on treatment, and is on track to meet to President Obama’s goal of supporting 6 million by the end of 2013. Despite this progress, tremendous challenges continue for local health systems in areas most affected by HIV/AIDS. Sub-Saharan African countries, home to the vast majority of those living with the virus, have only three percent of the global health workforce.

Roche understands the challenge presented in facing the HIV pandemic and has formulated its response to this challenge through its AmpliCare initiative. AmpliCare is a multi-faceted programme from Roche Diagnostics, designed to enable people in low income and low-middle income countries and middle-income countries with high-disease burden with sustainable access to diagnostic solutions related to communicable diseases, with a specific focus on HIV/AIDS. The training programs provided by Roche in this partnership will form an important facet of its AmpliCare response.

“The collaboration between the Office of US Global Aids Coordinator/CDC and Roche demonstrates the unique impact that public-private partnerships can have on addressing health challenges in the developing world. We are confident that this partnership will make a meaningful difference in people’s lives,” said Dr. Michael Heuer, Head of Europe, Middle East and Latin America, Roche Diagnostics.

About PEPFAR

The U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is the U.S. Government initiative to support partner nations around the world in responding to HIV/AIDS. It was launched in 2003, and is the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease internationally in history. Through PEPFAR, the U.S. Government has committed approximately $46 billion to bilateral HIV/AIDS programs, the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and bilateral TB programs to date. For more information, please visit www.PEPFAR.gov.
About Roche

Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Roche is a leader in research-focused healthcare with combined strengths in pharmaceuticals and diagnostics. Roche is the world's largest biotech company with truly differentiated medicines in oncology, virology, inflammation, metabolism and CNS. Roche is also the world leader in in-vitro diagnostics, tissue-based cancer diagnostics and a pioneer in diabetes management. Roche's personalized healthcare strategy aims at providing medicines and diagnostic tools that enable tangible improvements in the health, quality of life and survival of patients. In 2011, Roche had over 80,000 employees worldwide and invested over 8 billion Swiss francs in R&D. The Group posted sales of 42.5 billion Swiss francs. Genentech, United States, is a wholly owned member of the Roche Group. Roche has a majority stake in Chugai Pharmaceutical, Japan. For more information: www.roche.com.

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