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Roche and Government of Côte d’Ivoire sign Memoranda of Understanding to address breast cancer and viral hepatitis among low-income patients

Roche (SIX: RO, ROG; OTCQX: RHHBY) announced today that it has formalized a partnership with the Côte d’Ivoire Ministry of Health and Fight against AIDS to facilitate increased access to innovative treatments for viral hepatitis B, C, and D and breast cancer. The agreement builds upon the existing National Programme for the Fight against Viral Hepatitis (PNLHV) and National Programme against Cancer (PNLCa) established by the Ministry of Health and Fight Against AIDS in 2008. The programmes were developed to provide a national response to the problems posed by these diseases and Roche has supported them through efforts related to prevention, early detection and therapeutic management of viral hepatitis and breast cancer.

The new hepatitis and breast cancer access programmes for people with low incomes are subject to two Memoranda of Understanding between Roche and the Ministry of Health and Fight against AIDS for a period of five years starting 1 January 2015. Roche will continue to support actions initiated by the national programmes in the areas of awareness, diagnosis, training and access to drug. Low-income patients will pay a minimal portion of the cost, with the government and Roche jointly covering the remainder of the costs.

“This agreement will allow for significantly more patients in Côte d’Ivoire to be treated with our innovative medicines for hepatitis and breast cancer. Access to our cancer treatments will mean that women suffering from certain types of breast cancer in Côte d’Ivoire will be able to benefit from these life-changing medicines as in other countries around the world,” stated Dr. Peter Hug, Head of Roche’s Pharma EEMEA Region. “We hope that we will be able to deliver similar collaborative programs in other sub-Saharan African countries.”

The Côte d’Ivoire agreement supports Roche’s strategy for sub-Saharan Africa which is focused on partnering with stakeholders to address key access barriers specific to the region and significantly increase access to innovative treatments in the disease areas of women’s cancers and hepatitis.

The viral hepatitis programme in Côte d’Ivoire aims to treat an additional 3,000 patients over a period of five
years, and 1,000 patients are expected to be treated for breast cancer over five years.

Viral hepatitis B, C, and D and breast cancer represent emerging public health problems in Côte d'Ivoire, as in many other sub-Saharan African countries. Both conditions generally pose the challenge of treatment affordability, especially for low-income people and households.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than two billion people worldwide are infected with hepatitis B and 350 million people are chronic carriers of this virus. In Côte d'Ivoire, with a population of approximately 24 million, the prevalence of hepatitis B is 13%, and about 2% in hepatitis C.

Breast cancer is the leading cancer in women in Côte d’Ivoire with a mean age of onset between 40 and 49 years, and a steadily-increasing prevalence with approximately 34 out of 100,000 women in the country suffering from the disease today. Approximately 2,250 new cases are diagnosed each year, and more than half of these women will not survive their disease.

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, immunology, infectious diseases, ophthalmology and neuroscience. Roche is also the world leader in in vitro diagnostics and tissue-based cancer diagnostics, and a frontrunner in diabetes management. Roche’s personalised healthcare strategy aims at providing medicines and diagnostics that enable tangible improvements in the health, quality of life and survival of patients. Founded in 1896, Roche has been making important contributions to global health for more than a century. Twenty-four medicines developed by Roche are included in the World Health Organisation Model Lists of Essential Medicines, among them life-saving antibiotics, antimalarials and chemotherapy.
In 2013 the Roche Group employed over 85,000 people worldwide, invested 8.7 billion Swiss francs in R&D and posted sales of 46.8 billion Swiss francs. Genentech, in the United States, is a wholly owned member of the Roche Group. Roche is the majority shareholder in Chugai Pharmaceutical, Japan. For more information, please visit www.roche.com.

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