



NEWS RELEASE

Merck Donates \$500,000 to Support River Blindness and Lymphatic Filariasis Elimination Efforts

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Grants Will Be Administered through the MECTIZAN® Donation Program and Will Support Precautionary Measures Required to Prevent the Spread of SARS-CoV-2 During Mass Drug Administration Programs for These Two Diseases

KENILWORTH, N.J.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Merck (NYSE: MRK), known as MSD outside the United States and Canada, and the MECTIZAN® Donation Program (MDP), announced today a \$500,000 cash donation to support non-governmental organization (NGO) partners working to eliminate river blindness (onchocerciasis) and lymphatic filariasis (LF). The funds are being provided by Merck and will be administered through an application process managed by the MDP, a public-private partnership that oversees elimination efforts of these two diseases. This funding will be offered in the form of grants to support the implementation of the World Health Organization's (WHO's) recommended precautionary measures to decrease the risk of the spread of SARS-CoV-2 during mass drug administration (MDA).

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:

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In April, in response to the pandemic, WHO issued interim guidance to countries to suspend community interventions targeting the elimination of neglected tropical diseases, including MDA. After months of careful assessment, in July, WHO released a decision-making framework for resuming MDA during the ongoing pandemic. The framework is based on a two-step approach: a risk-benefit assessment to decide if the planned activity should proceed; and, if activities move forward, a list of precautionary measures that should be applied to help decrease

the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and strengthen the capacity of the health system to manage any residual risk. These important precautionary measures will result in an increase in program costs, which may be a burden to some countries and their implementing partners.

“The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic is especially challenging for communities that continue to be threatened by river blindness and lymphatic filariasis. We can’t lose momentum and must strengthen our global partnerships to eliminate these infections,” said Dr. Julie L. Gerberding, chief patient officer at Merck. “We hope these grants will help sustain the implementation of good public health measures and protect people’s safety as they fight against these preventable diseases during this especially difficult time.”

Dr. Yao Sodahlon, MDP Director, stated "As the global community continues to battle the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, we remain committed to the health of our staff, the health of our partners, and the health of endemic communities. This grant opportunity will facilitate the implementation of robust safety measures when mass drug administration with MECTIZAN resumes."

Through the MDP and its partners -- including the ministries of health in endemic countries, impacted communities, NGOs, WHO, and donors -- more than 300 million people are reached each year. Since the inception of the program in 1987, Merck has donated more than 4 billion treatments.

More information on the eligibility and the application process can be found on the **MDP website**.

About Merck

For more than 125 years, Merck, known as MSD outside of the United States and Canada, has been inventing for life, bringing forward medicines and vaccines for many of the world’s most challenging diseases in pursuit of our mission to save and improve lives. We demonstrate our commitment to patients and population health by increasing access to health care through far-reaching policies, programs and partnerships. Today, Merck continues to be at the forefront of research to prevent and treat diseases that threaten people and animals – including cancer, infectious diseases such as HIV and Ebola, and emerging animal diseases – as we aspire to be the premier research-intensive biopharmaceutical company in the world. For more information, visit **www.merck.com** and connect with us on **Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube** and **LinkedIn**.

About the MECTIZAN® Donation Program

The MECTIZAN® Donation Program (MDP) was established at the Task Force for Global Health in 1987 to provide medical, technical and administrative oversight of the donation of MECTIZAN® by Merck for the treatment of onchocerciasis. In 1998, MDP expanded its mandate to include the donation of MECTIZAN to be distributed in

conjunction with albendazole (donated by GSK) for the elimination of lymphatic filariasis in onchocerciasis co-endemic areas. In 2017, MDP's mandate was subsequently expanded to include MECTIZAN donation for the implementation of the WHO recommended triple therapy (Ivermectin + Diethylcarbamazine + Albendazole or IDA) to accelerate the elimination of LF in countries where river blindness is not endemic.

Forward-Looking Statement of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, N.J., USA

This news release of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, N.J., USA (the "company") includes "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the safe harbor provisions of the U.S. Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements are based upon the current beliefs and expectations of the company's management and are subject to significant risks and uncertainties. If underlying assumptions prove inaccurate or risks or uncertainties materialize, actual results may differ materially from those set forth in the forward-looking statements.

Risks and uncertainties include but are not limited to, general industry conditions and competition; general economic factors, including interest rate and currency exchange rate fluctuations; the impact of the global outbreak of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19); the impact of pharmaceutical industry regulation and health care legislation in the United States and internationally; global trends toward health care cost containment; technological advances, new products and patents attained by competitors; challenges inherent in new product development, including obtaining regulatory approval; the company's ability to accurately predict future market conditions; manufacturing difficulties or delays; financial instability of international economies and sovereign risk; dependence on the effectiveness of the company's patents and other protections for innovative products; and the exposure to litigation, including patent litigation, and/or regulatory actions.

The company undertakes no obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. Additional factors that could cause results to differ materially from those described in the forward-looking statements can be found in the company's 2019 Annual Report on Form 10-K and the company's other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) available at the SEC's Internet site (www.sec.gov).

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