



# News Release

*Embargo the release until 18:15 Beijing Time, May 11, 2005*

## **Merck Sharp & Dohme and the People's Republic of China join to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic in China**

**Largest Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Public-Private Partnership Formed in China**

BEIJING, CHINA and WHITEHOUSE STATION, N.J. (May 11, 2005) -- The Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China and Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD also known as Merck & Co., Inc., Whitehouse Station, N.J., U.S.A.) today officially launched a Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Cooperative Project, a Public-Private Partnership, for the prevention, treatment and care of HIV/AIDS in China. The project, the largest of its kind in China, was launched with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by Wang Longde, Vice Minister of Health, and Judy C. Lewent, Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, and President, Human Health Asia, Merck & Co., Inc.

"China welcomes the support of the international business community to join the fight against HIV/AIDS," said Vice Premier Wu Yi when meeting with Judy Lewent at Zhongnanhai this afternoon. "Combating AIDS, however, is not just a government obligation. It is also the common responsibility of society as a whole, including business".

"We are dedicated to a long-term partnership with the Government of China and are committed to supporting efforts towards deterring the progress of the epidemic in China," stated Ms. Lewent. "MSD brings extensive expertise in the field of HIV/AIDS and experience in supporting a comprehensive approach to HIV/AIDS management." MSD has collaborated with other national governments to support the development of

sustained comprehensive initiatives in Botswana, Romania and other countries severely affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The Merck Company Foundation (U.S.A.) has committed US\$30 million to support the partnership over the next five years. The Government of China, through the leadership of the MOH, will provide resources such as staff, facilities and equipment. The Ministry of Health and MSD will introduce the program in Liangshan Prefecture, Sichuan Province starting in the fall 2005.

### **Integrated approach to fighting HIV/AIDS in China**

The goal of the partnership is to develop and apply a model that joins together all aspects of HIV/AIDS prevention, patient care, treatment and support. The model is focused on providing patients with a range of services including: education, counseling, harm reduction and health services, including drug treatment, and care for HIV/AIDS. The core elements of the model are (1) identifying high risk populations that drive the epidemic, such as intravenous drug users and commercial sex workers, (2) conducting disease awareness and education programs, (3) introducing prevention strategies, such as condom distribution, needle exchange and methadone maintenance therapy, (4) offering care and treatment programs, including counseling and testing, antiretroviral treatment, healthcare worker and patient management training, and (5) providing social and economic support, ranging from establishing community networks to job skills training.

China's first HIV case was reported in 1985, and there are an estimated 840,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in the country. "The current situation we face in China to prevent HIV is severe," said Vice Minister Wang "We are in urgent need of the support from every aspect of society to fight this disease. This partnership with MSD is a valuable example of a government and business cooperation. It will have a positive impact on the comprehensive prevention and control of HIV/AIDS through mobilizing the society as a whole. "

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