

NEWSLETTER # 27 – June 2005

PHARMACIENS SANS FRONTIERES COMITE INTERNATIONAL

PSFCI General Meeting

Five new member have joined the Board of Directors of PSFCI:

Andrea Isenegger, a Swiss pharmacist

Jean-Michel Lavoie, a Canadian pharmacist

Odette Pion, a French pharmacist

Jochen Schreeck, a German pharmacist

Audrey Vermeersch, a French pharmacist

PSF 20th Congress

“We need to achieve the right balance between humanism and professionalism”. That could be the conclusion of the workshop on “Yesterday’s, today’s and tomorrow’s humanitarian assistance”, which discussed the rapid evolution of humanitarian action over the past 20 years. The quality and impact of the action have become the main criteria for selecting projects, humanitarian work is increasingly professional with young graduates in humanitarian subjects entering the sector, donors require more and more expertise from NGOs and ISO-type quality standards are increasingly demanded. This creates a risk that technocracy and bureaucracy will replace human contacts, which constitute the basis of any humanitarian action. How can we avoid the risk and be efficient while adhering to quality standards? Do nostalgics of yesteryear’s humanitarian assistance have justified concerns? Audrey, a former volunteer on PSFCI programs in Burkina-Faso and Eastern Kasai (DR of the Congo), reassured them: *“In the field, I did not feel that there were any romantics or cold professionals. Everyone is deeply committed to humanitarian work with the objective of quality in mind.”*

Speakers at the two other workshops -malaria and AIDS-, outlined the advances in those fields, the activities carried out and the constraints that prevent access to quality and affordable medicines for millions of patients.

Charlotte Joos presented the work she has done at the Institut Pasteur in Dakar. About sixty scientists around the world are involved in different studies to eventually develop not a preventive but a therapeutic vaccine.

PSF had decided to dedicate its anniversary congress to Florence Aubenas and Hussein Hanoun, held hostage in Iraq, and the congress attendees were pleased to hear of their release the following day.

EVENTS

G8

Finance ministers from the group of eight industrialized nations have agreed on debt relief for a small number of the world’s poorest countries.

Forty billion dollars will be written off, but we must remember that every year, these countries reimburse more than \$39 billion. According to experts they have already paid 7 times the amount of their debt. Some countries that spend 70% of their GDP to service their debt lacked the financial resources to ensure their economic and social development, and the gap between rich and poor countries has continued to widen for years.

The issue of increasing aid to southern countries is on the agenda of the G8 summit to be held in Gleneagles (UK) on 6-8 July. It will also be discussed at the UN High-level Plenary Meeting to be held in New-York in September 2005.

World military spending in 2004

World military spending rose for the sixth year running in 2004, reaching 1 trillion dollars according to SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute).

A small fraction of this amount would address most of the world’s health problems.

UNO – 4 June

According to Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS, *the gap between need and action remains enormously wide and may even grow [...] Until and unless we control this epidemic it will continue*

to expand and worsen for decades, killing unbelievably large numbers and wrecking entire societies. [...] Resolve the AIDS crisis and we remove a major hurdle to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

AIDS

The 3 by 5 objective of 3 million people living with AIDS to be under treatment by the end of 2005 will probably not be met.

On 2 June in Brazil, the Commission of Constitution and Justice of the Chamber of Deputies approved a project authorizing the government to break patents on drugs used to treat AIDS. Brazil deputies considered that public health interests prevail over industrial rights. The project must now be approved by the Federal Senate, and then ratified by the President. Five US deputies urged the Bush administration to consider imposing trade sanctions against Brazil if the country approves the project.

COORDINATION SUD

The “Guide Synergie Qualité” will be introduced on 23 June at the Paris International Conference Centre. *This guide is the result of a collective work carried out over two years by several NGOs based on non-normative criteria for international solidarity actions.*

Five main themes are covered: humanitarian ethics, associative governance, human resource management, the project cycle, the role of populations. They favour a layered approach to quality. Consolidation of general principles towards which NGOs should work, and tools to identify and then reduce the possibility for error, from headquarters to the field, is the method proposed by “Synergie Qualité”. www.coordinationsud.org

MISSIONS

Cambodia:

An 11-month emergency program funded by the WHO aims to promote access to health care for children under 5 in the remote Province of Stung Treng.

Indonesia:

Hlima Razkaoui, desk officer for PSFCI programs “outside of Africa” is in the Province of Banda Aceh to conduct the supervision of the program.

Democratic Republic of the Congo:

Kalemie: PSFCI offices and warehouse built and equipped. Part of the medicines have arrived. Our teams will now travel to 9 health zones to provide training (stock management, supervision tools, new malaria treatment protocol). The warehouse should soon become one of the Regional Distribution Centres of FEDECAME.

Lubao: priority is given to construction and rehabilitation of health centres, 4 laboratories, 2 surgical units and a pharmaceutical store in Ludimbi Lukula. A reliable and comprehensive database is currently being developed to collect epidemiological and primary health care performance data in all health centres. One of our vehicles needs to be replaced, because it no longer meets safety standards.

Our programs grow. We increasingly need skilled staff in the field. Please see our vacancies in the “Leave with PSFCI” section of our website www.psfci.org, and send your CV and cover letter to i.martins@psf-ci.org

In compliance with the French data protection act in the law of 6 January 1978 (CNIL), you have the right to access and correct information about yourself. You can exercise this right by writing to PSF-CI Service informatique 4 Voie Militaire des Gravanches 63100- Clermont-Ferrand (France)

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