

## NEWSLETTER #28 – July 2005

### PHARMACIENS SANS FRONTIERES COMITE INTERNATIONAL

Apparently, an attack upon the patent system in developing countries would have devastating consequences for pharmaceutical research. It is clearer now why we should let **17 million people** die of infectious diseases **every year** because of lack of access to medicines.

More than 17 million deaths a year is a small price to pay for the future of pharmaceutical research which is very important because it... saves lives.

## EVENTS

### International Biology Days 2005 – 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary

The International Biology Days will be held at the CNIT in Paris la Défense on 3 - 5 November. As the only event in Europe dedicated to medical biology, the International Biology Days (JIB) present an opportunity for professionals in the biology field to exchange ideas and learn about up-to-date technologies.

For further information or registration: [www.sdbio.fr/jib](http://www.sdbio.fr/jib) or [sdb@sdbio.fr](mailto:sdb@sdbio.fr)

### Counterfeit medicines

The WHO has estimated that every year, the traffic of fake drugs generates at least \$35 billion, up 50% from 1998! But according to Dr Lembit Rago, WHO's coordinator for quality assurance and safety of medicines, the real magnitude of the problem is unknown, as for fear of adversely affecting the real medicine, manufacturers and authorities do not reveal the real figures.

According to the WHO, 6-10% of all drugs sold around the world are counterfeit and contain no active ingredient. In poor countries, the average rate is estimated to be 25%, with peaks of 80%.

This dramatic increase has two causes: online sales and the excessive deregulation of the drug market, where a medicine is regarded as a commodity like any other

<http://www.lepoint.fr/societe/document.html?did=164349>

An early warning system has been established to report counterfeit cases:

<http://www.who.int/medicines/organization/qsm/activities/qualityassurance/cft/CounterfeitReporting.htm>

### Access to medicines

Question asked by a journalist from Libération, a French newspaper, to German Velasquez, of the WHO Department of Essential drugs and medicines policy:

*“Could we see the day when governments, or even pharmaceutical firms would be hauled before the International Criminal Court for “crimes against humanity by omission” or “non-assistance to people in danger”?”*

Answer of M. Velasquez:

*“It is not impossible. The right to health, the right to life is denied to citizens. **Essential medicines that can save a life are a global public good.** If we recognise this, then the key question must be: Can a global public good be patentable?”*

## MISSIONS

### Burkina-Faso: the film Tiim

Between 15 and 29 June, around 27,300 people in 12 villages in the northern region of Burkina Faso attended the film showing and discussion organised by Cinomade and PSFCI, in partnership with health facilities and local associations, in the framework of the PSFCI support program to the Northern Regional Health Authority.

The three-year program, started in April 2004, also aims to strengthen the capacity of regional stores of the health districts, operationalize the first level referral health centre laboratories and train

the staff, support the extension of the essential generic drug distribution network, encourage the rational use of drugs and improve the community participation process.

### **Southern-Sudan**

Emergency program with funding from the WHO via DFID

Following the signature of the peace agreement, around 110,000 refugees and displaced persons have returned home. PSFCI and its partners are providing emergency medical assistance to ensure that these people can have access to quality primary health care by supplying emergency kits to health centres/units in 17 counties.

### **Indonesia**

PSFCI and the WHO were invited to give their opinion on the problem of inappropriate donations to the province of Aceh and the difficulties experienced by health facilities in managing them at the annual seminar for Provincial and District Directorates responsible for drug procurement and management in Indonesia, held in Surabaya. on 30 June.

While Maylenn Lix, PSF program's medical coordinator and Hlima Razkaoui, Operations Officer at the association's Headquarters explained the objectives, the strategy and the activities carried out by PSFCI in the province of Aceh, the WHO representative introduced the Guidelines for Drug Donations and insisted on the need for each health district to be aware of the needs of its health facilities in order to be able to refuse any donation that does not meet these needs. This caused discontent among the participants who asked "how do you decline a donation when it comes from the heart?".

The issues of responsibility for uncontrolled donations, responsibility of the donor and of the receiving country were raised. It is difficult to refuse to accept a donation, but it must be done.

The management program is well under way. However, six months after the tsunami, some donations are still arriving directly into hospitals despite the request from the health authorities that they pass through the provincial warehouse. According to the WHO, a number of associations continue to work in the field without informing the health authorities in the province.

The survey conducted concurrently with this program is nearing completion.

### **Audits of suppliers**

All 4 suppliers audited in India meet PSFCI's quality requirements and will be invited to submit bids to PSFCI.

### **Recruitment**

- a pharmacist for Southern Sudan
- two pharmacists, an administrator/logistician and a head of mission for Indonesia
- a logistics coordinator for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

### **PSFCI monthly newsletter**

The next newsletter will be issued at the end of September!

*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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