



5.1.2e  
 PO Box 20350  
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 Netherlands

Geneva, 28 April 2020

Re: GARDP SBI Announcement / Access to Covid-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator

Dear 5.1.2e

I am contacting you regarding three inter-related points: (i) the important links between COVID19 and serious bacterial infections, (ii) GARDP's forthcoming announcement (29<sup>th</sup> April) of its collaboration to accelerate the development of, and access to, cefepime-taniborbactam for serious bacterial infections and (iii) the newly launched access to covid-19 tools (ACT) accelerator and related rolling pledging campaign that will start on 4 May 2020.

Serious bacterial infections are among the major causes of death and disability for people of all ages in hospitals and healthcare settings and drug-resistance is making these infections increasingly difficult to treat. WHO has identified carbapenem-resistant *Enterobacteriaceae*, *Acinetobacter baumannii* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* as 'critical-level' pathogens posing the greatest threat to global health and urgently requiring new treatments and GARDP is responding to that by launching its first clinical project on serious bacterial infections. GARDP and Venatorx Pharmaceuticals have joined forces to develop new treatments for such infections in adults and children with limited or no treatment options at present.

Bacterial infections are an important co-morbidity during normal times / non-pandemic settings, and the link that is emerging during the current crisis, where some patients may be succumbing to opportunistic bacterial infections in intensive care units, is very troubling. Antibiotics are in high demand and their increased use, coupled with disrupted supply chains, could lead to critical shortages. Longer term, the pandemic's economic fallout must not divert resources away from antibiotic research and development, which is already drastically underfunded.

We know that AMR is a health security issue in its own right which, unaddressed, will continue to get worse and that there is a critical need to support R&D, access and stewardship efforts. However, with COVID-19 the role of antibiotics as the bedrock of the health system has become even more important. GARDP will focus its efforts on accelerating new treatments that will eventually support or replace those being used during the current pandemic and provide treatments for secondary and hospital-associated bacterial infections, including during future pandemics, such as complicated urinary tract infections, hospital-acquired pneumonia and sepsis.

The immediate objective under the access to covid-19 tools (ACT) Accelerator is to prevent further illness, deaths, and social and economic devastation from the current COVID-19 outbreak. Over the longer term, investments would also help to put in place a pandemic response system that is fit for purpose in handling the inevitable outbreaks of the future. Given what we know about the use of antibiotics during the current (and future) pandemics, as well as the well-established knowledge of the "slow-moving" pandemic of AMR, these longer-term preparations must involve antibiotics.

The ACT commitments include an interconnected response where every activity is executed through the lens of equitable global access. The remarks by EC President von der Leyen when announcing the online pledging conference, included reference to innovative and equitable solutions, close coordination with WHO and intensive care treatment capacity for COVID-19 patients. These elements are all embedded into GARDP's mandate and model and we would like to use the timing of our announcement of our program that is of "highest relevance" to pandemic preparedness and response to engage with the Accelerator and pledging campaign. We are in discussion with a range of stakeholders in this regard and would appreciate your feedback on how the Netherlands can support GARDP's involvement.

Please find attached the collaboration announcement and background document (both under embargo until 29 April), social media kit we have developed for partners to amplify the news and the Viewpoint I recently authored on the link between COVID-19 and drug-resistant infections.

I would welcome a quick discussion on these various points should your agenda allow it.

Sincerely,

5.1.2e

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CC: VWS: 5.1.2e  
 Netherlands Permanent Mission Geneva: 5.1.2e