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Funding for HIV treatment research exceeded US\$ 2.4 billion in 2009

*Governments, pharmaceutical companies, and non-profit organisations continue
commitment to innovation in research and development for HIV treatment*

New York/Geneva/Rome – Tuesday 19 July 2011 – Data collected for the first time on global investments in HIV treatment-related research and development showed that at least US\$ 2.46 billion was available in 2009. The Treatment Action Group, AVAC, and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) issued the report which was released today at the International AIDS Society's 6th Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Prevention, and Treatment in Rome, Italy.

The report, *An Exploratory Analysis of HIV Treatment Research and Development Investments in 2009*, found that 48 funders worldwide (of 144 surveyed) reported investing \$US 2.46 billion across six HIV-related research categories—basic science, drug discovery and development, operational and implementation science, antiretroviral prevention, applied/infrastructure and HIV diagnostics.

“Recent scientific breakthroughs have shown that antiretroviral therapy not only saves lives, it can also prevents new infections. This is a game changer for the AIDS response and will increase demand for treatment,” said Paul De Lay, Deputy Executive Director, Programme, UNAIDS. “New investments are urgently needed to produce better, cheaper medicines to ensure the 9 million people still in need of treatment for their own health gain access and that the new demand for treatment for prevention is met.”

An estimated 6.6 million people currently have access to antiretroviral treatment and a further 9 million are still in need. In a political declaration adopted at the recent United Nations High Level Meeting on AIDS in New York, UN member states committed to expanding access to treatment for 15 million people by 2015.

“This report marks the beginning of an ongoing effort to monitor global investments in HIV treatment research. It complements the existing efforts of the HIV Vaccines and Microbicides

Resource Tracking Working Group which has been reporting on HIV prevention technology investments since 2004", said Kevin Fisher of AVAC.

Public-sector funders accounted for almost three-fourths of reported HIV treatment research and development spending, with the U.S. National Institute of Health as the leading public-sector investor worldwide in HIV treatment research and development, investing US\$ 1.6 billion in 2009.

Pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies reported investing US\$ 591 million in 2009. However, the participation from the private sector in the survey was particularly low and the report outlines that this figure is likely to be substantially higher, possibly reaching over US\$ 1 billion.

"HIV drug discovery and development has never been more urgent. While the discovery and development of a safe and effective HIV vaccine is ongoing, it is clear that use of antiretroviral therapy is among the most powerful tools to prevent new HIV infections, preserve health, and lengthen life expectancy" said Eleonora Jimenez-Levi, TAG's Project Coordinator.

With new evidence showing the benefits of early initiation of HIV treatment in preventing HIV transmission, the report recommends new drug regimens be developed to be simpler, less toxic, resilient, more forgiving of treatment interruption, less prone to promote the emergence of drug resistance and have fewer complications with other drugs commonly used by people with HIV.

TAG's Executive Director Mark Harrington concludes, "The HIV treatment research landscape is changing. Thanks to recent treatment scale-up and prevention science breakthroughs and the new global treatment target of 15 million by 2015, there is real momentum to bring the epidemic under control and ultimately end it. To capitalize on these scientific gains continued investment and innovation are necessary to prevent new infections, to ensure people currently on treatment are able to continue, and to scale up treatment to reach all those who will benefit from earlier initiation of ART."

The report is available on-line at: www.treatmentactiongroup.org.

The HIV Treatment Research and Development Resource Tracking Project is a collaborative initiative of the Treatment Action Group (TAG) and AVAC, directed and managed by TAG, in collaboration with UNAIDS.

ABOUT TAG

Treatment Action Group (TAG) is an independent AIDS research and policy think tank fighting for better treatment, a vaccine, and a cure for AIDS. TAG works to ensure that all people with HIV receive lifesaving treatment, care, and information.

www.treatmentactiongroup.org

ABOUT AVAC

Founded in 1995, AVAC is a non-profit organization that uses education, policy analysis, advocacy and a network of global collaborations to accelerate the ethical development and global delivery of AIDS vaccines, male circumcision, microbicides, PrEP and other emerging HIV prevention options as part of a comprehensive response to the pandemic.

www.avac.org

ABOUT UNAIDS

UNAIDS' Vision: Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related deaths.

Mission: UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, is an innovative partnership that leads and inspires the world in achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

www.unaids.org