

ABSTRACTS OF THE EIGHTH EDCTP FORUM, 6–9 NOVEMBER 2016

Defeating poverty-related and neglected diseases in Africa: harnessing research for evidence-informed policies

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The Eighth Forum of the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership took place in Lusaka, Zambia from 6 to 9 November 2016. The biennial Forum has grown in size and recognition to become one of the largest international conferences for the presentation and discussion of frontier clinical research on poverty-related infectious diseases, as well as capacity development including ethics, regulatory and training initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa. With the support of the European Union, EDCTP member countries and other sponsors, the conference offers scholarships to many early and mid-career researchers especially from sub-Saharan Africa to present results of their studies and meet colleagues from Africa, Europe and beyond. Moreover, the conference provided opportunities for new collaborations with other actors in the field of global health, such as research institutes, international private and public funders, development agencies, product development partnerships and pharmaceutical and biomedical companies. The conference was attended by 434 participants from 48 countries, with scholarships for 120 early career scientists.

The theme of the Eighth Forum was: ‘Defeating poverty-related and neglected diseases in Africa: harnessing research for evidence-informed policies’ This reflects two specific aspects of the second EDCTP programme (EDCTP2, 2104–2024). The reference to neglected infectious diseases points to the broadening of the scope of the programme. In addition to HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, the scope of EDCTP includes now most neglected infectious diseases, diarrhoeal diseases, lower respiratory tract infections, and emerging or re-emerging infectious diseases of relevance to sub-Saharan Africa. Secondly, the theme refers to the importance of making sure that new scientific results find their way into health care policies and practice.

The Forum offered a comprehensive scientific programme with keynote addresses by prominent speakers from the North and South, oral presentations in plenary and parallel sessions, panel discussions, a collaborative session, scientific symposia, educational workshops, meet-the-expert sessions and poster presentations. In this Supplement to *BMJ Global Health*, the abstracts of the plenary presentations, the oral presentations in the various parallel sessions, and poster presentations are published. The abstracts give a work-in-progress impression of the scope and objectives of the EDCTP programme.

This Forum was officially opened by His Excellency Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, the President of the Republic of Zambia, who is a true advocate for health research capacity development in Africa. Several high-ranking government policy makers including ministers, directors from ministries of health, higher

education and science & technology from Zambia and other African countries participated. This was a clear demonstration of the growing interest among African governments to strengthen their collaboration with EDCTP. The EDCTP programme has an added value for all countries in sub-Saharan Africa through its funding strategies and plans.

This general theme of partnership between North and South, between Europe and Africa was taken up again by the new High Representative for the North, Professor Marcel Tanner, in his keynote address to the conference. He reflected on the nature of partnership which should go beyond cooperating on individual projects to programme portfolio level and partnering at a strategic level. ‘Mutual learning for change’ is a feature of a true partnership in which North and South can learn much from each other.

Partnership was also demonstrated by many stakeholders who enriched the programme by organising workshops, a collaborative meeting and satellite meetings. Moreover, nine symposia were organised as part of the scientific programme by BioVentures for Global Health, Cochrane Centre South Africa, Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung, European Vaccine Initiative, Medicines for Malaria Ventures with the West African Network for Clinical Trials for Antimalarial Drugs, NWO-WOTRO Science for Global Development, the Pan-African Consortium for the Evaluation of Antituberculosis Antibiotics (PanACEA) consortium, and the University of Tübingen. The Ministry of Health of Zambia organised a symposium on Clinical research in Zambia for effective control programmes and showed further support by co-hosting the Forum.

The Forum, which showcases the tangible results of collaborative research and partnership, was the appropriate setting for the award of four EDCTP 2016 Prizes. EDCTP recognised outstanding individuals and research teams from Africa and Europe who have made significant contributions in their field of research. In addition to their scientific excellence, the awardees made major contributions to the EDCTP objectives of clinical research capacity development in Africa and establishing research networks between North and South as well as within sub-Saharan Africa. The Award for Outstanding Research Team was given to the University of Zambia – University College London Medical School (UNZA-UCLMS) Research & Training Program. Professor Marleen Temmerman (Aga Khan University, Kenya) received the Award for Outstanding Female Scientist. Professor Shabir A. Mahdi (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa) was given the Award for Scientific Leadership, while Professor Fred Newton Binka (Ghana; currently coordinator of WHO’s Emergency Response to Artemisinin Resistance in Phnom Penh, Cambodia) was honoured with the Dr Pascoal Mocumbi Prize in recognition of his outstanding achievements in advancing health research and capacity development in Africa.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the EDCTP member states and all our sponsors for their generous support. In particular, we extend a special thanks to the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Zambia, an EDCTP member country, for co-hosting the Eighth EDCTP Forum. In conclusion, we would like to thank the EDCTP Organising committee, colleagues and friends for their help, support and advice in planning and implementing the Forum. The members of the Programme committee, i.e. the members of the Scientific Advisory Committee and the EDCTP Project Officers, earned our warm thanks for putting together the Eighth EDCTP Forum Programme.