ABSTRACTS OF THE NINTH EDCTP FORUM, 17–21 SEPTEMBER 2018 INTRODUCTION

The Ninth Forum of the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership

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The EDCTP community meets biennially to share research findings, plan new partnerships and collaborations, and discuss maximising impact from EDCTP-funded research. In 2018, the Ninth EDCTP Forum took place in Lisbon, Portugal, from 17–21 September 2018. The Lisbon meeting was the largest international conference focusing on clinical research on poverty-related infectious diseases in sub-Saharan Africa. It started with a strong commitment, from European and African EDCTP member countries, for a successor programme to EDCTP2 (2014–2024). It provided a platform for the presentation of project results and discussion of progress in clinical research and capacity strengthening in sub-Saharan Africa.

The theme of the Ninth Forum was ‘Clinical research and sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa: the impact of North-South partnerships’. This reflected not only the broader scope of a larger EDCTP research programme but also the growing awareness of the need for global cooperation to prepare for public health emergencies and strengthen health systems. The theme highlighted the impact of Europe-Africa partnerships supporting clinical research and the clinical research environment, towards achieving the sustainable development goals in sub-Saharan Africa.

A central topic of the Forum was the discussion of the character and scope of an EDCTP successor programme, which should start in 2021 under the next European Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe. On 17 September, a high-level meeting on this topic took place immediately before the opening of the Forum¹. On 19 September, the plenary session continued this discussion through a panel of representatives of strategic partners. There was consensus on the added value of the programme for Europe and the countries in sub-Saharan Africa and political commitment to a successor programme. Poverty-related infectious diseases and a partnership approach will remain central to the programme. There was also a general awareness that all participating countries would need to engage more strongly with a successor programme, both in its governance and in their financial contributions to its objectives.

The Forum hosted 550 participants from more than 50 countries. The programme consisted of keynote addresses by policy makers, research leaders, and prominent speakers from Europe and Africa in 5 plenary presentations. There were 9 symposia, 45 oral presentations in parallel sessions, and 74 electronic poster presentations. Abstracts of the plenary, oral and poster presentations are published in this supplement to *BMJ Global Health*.

¹EDCTP high-level meeting report: *Moving forward and consolidating gains for an EDCTP successor programme*. EDCTP, The Hague, December 2018 (www.edctp.org).

EDCTP is proud of its contribution to strengthening clinical research capacity in Africa, with more than 400 postgraduate students and 56 EDCTP fellows supported under the first EDCTP programme. The second programme developed a comprehensive fellowship scheme. More than 100 EDCTP fellows (former and current) participated in a one-day pre-conference to discuss the further development of our Alumni Network launched in 2017. The Forum also offered scholarships to many early and mid-career researchers from sub-Saharan Africa and Europe. With the support of the European Union, EDCTP member countries and sponsors, they were able to present results of their studies and meet colleagues from Africa and Europe.

The Forum also provided the appropriate platform for recognising individual and team achievements through the four EDCTP 2018 Prizes. With the support of the European Union, EDCTP recognised outstanding individuals and research teams from Africa and Europe. 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.

1. **Dr Pascoal Mocumbi Prize** Professor Souleyman Mboup (Professor of Microbiology, University of Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar; Head of the Bacteriology-Virology Laboratory of CHU Le Dantec, Dakar; and President of IRESSEF, Senegal) was recognised for his outstanding achievements in advancing health research and capacity development in Africa.
2. **Outstanding Research Team Prize** The prize was awarded to the team of the CHAPAS (Children with HIV in Africa – Pharmacokinetics and acceptability of simple antiretroviral regimens) studies, led by Professor Diana Gibb (MRC Clinical Trials Unit, United Kingdom).
3. **Outstanding Female Scientist Prize** The prize was awarded to Professor Gita Ramjee (Chief Specialist Scientist and Director of the HIV Prevention Research Unit of the South African Medical Research Council, Durban, South Africa) for her outstanding contributions to her field.
4. **Scientific Leadership Prize** The prize was awarded to Professor Keertan Dheda (Head of the Centre for Lung Infection and Immunity and Head of the Division of Pulmonology at Groote Schuur Hospital and the University of Cape Town, South Africa) for his research contributions and leadership.

Partnership is at the core of the EDCTP mission. In the year before the Forum, Nigeria and Ethiopia were welcomed as the newest member countries of the EDCTP Association, while Angola became an aspirant member. Partnership was also demonstrated by the many stakeholders who enriched the programme by organising scientific symposia, collaborative sessions and workshops. We thank our sponsors Novartis, Merck, the European Union, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Germany), the Institute of Health Carlos III (Spain), the National Alliance for Life Sciences and Health (France), the Medical Research Council (United Kingdom), the Swedish International Development Agency (Sweden), ClinaPharm (African CRO), the Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (Germany), The Global Health Network (United Kingdom), PATH, and ScreenTB. We gratefully acknowledge the support of our partners and hosts of the Forum, the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

The tenth EDCTP Forum will take place in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020.