



**Communication and Marketing Department**  
**Isebe loThungelwano neNtengiso**  
**Kommunikasie en Bemerkingsdepatement**

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa  
Welgelegen House, Chapel Road Extension, Rosebank, Cape Town  
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 5427/5428/5674 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 5628

[www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)

**Statement by Mrs Naledi Pandor, Minister of Science and  
Technology at the announcement of the Malaria candidate drug,  
University of Cape Town, 28 August 2012, 12:00**

I have the pleasure to announce the discovery of a compound which will be of the first ever clinical candidate researched on African soil as part of a modern pharmaceutical industry drug discovery programme.

The recently discovered compound from the aminopyridine class not only has the potential to become part of a single-dose cure for all strains of malaria, but might also be able to block transmission of the parasite from person to person, according to a research collaboration involving the Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV), based in Switzerland, and the Drug Discovery and Development Centre (H3-D) at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. On the basis of initial results it has been selected by MMV for further development.

The candidate molecule is novel, potent and has the potential to have a significant impact on global malaria control and eradication.

This pioneering programme between MMV and UCT, has had investment of over R25million for the Department of Science and Technology. This is a powerful demonstration of how much can be accomplished when open minded researchers come together for the sake of the greater good of humanity.

First and foremost my congratulations go to Professor Chibale and his team.

The discovery that we announce today is a significant victory in the battle to alleviate the burden of disease in Africa. Clearly the war on disease is not yet won but I am excited by the role that our excellent scientists have played in finding a potential single-dose cure for malaria and possibly preventing its transmission. This is evidence both of top science undertaken in South Africa and also of the power of continental and international scientific collaboration in addressing the societal challenges of our time.

South Africa in general has built considerable strength in clinical research over the past decade. Our main focus has been on HIV/AIDS and TB. This development has occurred together with significant growth in the basic sciences that underpin infectious disease research (immunology, virology, microbiology, biochemistry & genetics).

As a result, we have established a continuum of research strength from the basic sciences to clinical research. The seamless connection between the two enables very strong laboratory support to be given to clinical research that is aimed at applying novel interventions in the field (diagnostics, vaccines and drugs).

The ability to cycle between the laboratory, clinic and field site provides a very powerful platform for translational research. This gives South Africa a very significant comparative advantage over countries in which strength is focused either on the basic sciences or clinical research, but not both.

However, skills are critical. In South Africa we have shown that we have the necessary skills. Similarly, there are researchers spread across Africa who are involved in groundbreaking research, but need to get the necessary support and acknowledgement within Africa.

Collaborative partnerships between African researchers working in the rest of the world should be encouraged to provide a strong combined front in the quest for African solutions for Africa.

It is essential that African researchers become involved in finding solutions for the problems of Africa.

We have to combine our efforts with our local knowledge to find African solutions. African-led innovation should be applied to address African health challenges in addition to Africa receiving drugs and other tools discovered and developed outside Africa.

I would also like to draw your attention today to neglected diseases, the majority of which affect developing countries, particularly those in Africa. According to the World Health Organization, more than 1 billion people, representing one sixth of the world population, are infected with one or more of these diseases that have very low priority in national health programmes.

It's estimated that 14 million people die each year from communicable diseases such as malaria, TB, and sleeping sickness. An estimated 97 % of deaths from infectious diseases occur in developing countries, with the poorest people in those nations disproportionately affected.

I am sure we will all agree that there is an urgent need to ensure a robust research pipeline full of newer, more effective, easier-to-use medicines.

I am very proud of the achievements of South African researchers and am looking forward to see this candidate drug on day in the clinics across Africa. It just remains for me to wish all involved much success as we look forward to its clinical development.