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UCT earns position on international expert advisory board to tackle drug resistant infections

The UK government has appointed an expert advisory board to advise how it can best spend an additional 50 million British pounds over the next five years to fund innovative initiatives to tackle drug resistant infections, which include resistance to antibiotics.

Professor Kelly Chibale, founder and director of the University of Cape Town's Drug Discovery and Development Centre (H3D) and founding director of the South African Medical Research Council/UCT drug discovery and development research unit, has been selected as a member of the advisory board.

The 12-member board was appointed by Professor Dame Sally Davies, the Chief Medical Officer for England and UK government adviser to support the Global Antimicrobial Resistance Innovation Fund (GAMRIF).

Professor Davies said: "Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) poses the biggest threat to global health with the potential to kill millions each year. No one nation, or sector, can tackle this alone, and therefore it is critical that we encourage the public and private sectors to work together to tackle AMR globally.

"I am proud that we are bringing together such a wealth of expertise to form a multi-disciplinary board that will identify the gaps within the current funding system and the best opportunities for funding solutions."

Professor Chibale said he was honoured to be selected as a member of the board based on his drug discovery and global health experience. H3D is globally recognised for its groundbreaking research into a possible single-dose cure for malaria. In addition to malaria and tuberculosis drug discovery, H3D has also recently expanded into AMR drug discovery, specifically resistant Gram negative bacteria.

Professor Chibale said: "AMR represents the greatest threat to modern medicine. The UK has continued to champion the need for tackling the threat of AMR at the highest political level, including at the G7, G20 and recently at the UN General Assembly. As a member of the board, I will play a vital role in the set-up of the fund and work to develop and shape the scope of the Fund, recommend mechanisms of delivery of the Fund's budget, and work to create a platform to leverage additional investment in AMR Research and Development," said Professor Chibale.

The GAMRIF will help to invest in:

- High-quality research and development and stimulate innovation to tackle AMR to promote the welfare of people in low and middle income countries.
- Neglected areas which may currently lack commercial or academic interest, for example for research that aspires to prolong the shelf life of existing antibiotics.
- Areas of research and development around new therapeutics, alternative therapies, preventative measures and diagnostics.

The expert advisory board will provide critical advice on aspects such as the precise scope of the fund, scientific objectives and investment opportunities. It will also consider where the health need is greatest in low and middle income countries.

Christopher Egerton-Warburton has been appointed as the chair of the expert advisory board. He is a founding partner at Lion's Head Global Partners and is an expert in the structuring and execution of innovative financing solutions, having been involved in innovative financing for health in over a decade, particularly working on vaccines.

The members of the expert advisory board are:

- Prof Rosanna Peeling, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- Prof Keith Klugman, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Prof Susanna Sternberg Lewerin, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
- Prof Kelly Chibale, University of Cape Town
- Dr David Gray, University of Dundee
- Prof Melissa Leach, University of Sussex
- Prof Elias Mossialos, London School of Economics and Imperial College London
- Dr Bill Love, Destiny Pharma
- Ms Florence Séjourné, Da Volterra
- Dr Jorge Villacian, Janssen Diagnostics
- Dr Theo Kanellos, Zoetis

About the University of Cape Town's H3D

H3D was founded in 2010 at UCT, the oldest university in South Africa and consistently highest-ranked African university. H3D officially opened its doors in April 2011, with the goal of creating the leading drug discovery and development platform in Africa. H3D is Africa's first modern fully integrated drug discovery centre and the only one of its kind on the continent. The vision of H3D is to deliver clinical candidates for communicable diseases where there is an unmet medical need. In 2012 the first compound discovered by H3D in

partnership with Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) was approved by MMV as a preclinical anti-malarial development candidate and has completed Phase I human trials. In April 2016 a second preclinical candidate to come out of the collaboration led by H3D involving MMV and an international network of partners was announced.

Under the directorship of Professor Kelly Chibale, the group has been active in malaria and tuberculosis drug discovery for the last four years and is now expanding into other therapeutic areas such as antimicrobial resistance, specifically resistant Gram negative bacteria. It currently comprises more than 50 scientific staff members in the areas of medicinal chemistry, biology as well as Drug Metabolism and Pharmacokinetics. H3D has state-of-the-art laboratories and has the necessary infrastructure to conduct integrated drug discovery projects to deliver clinical candidates.

For more information on H3D, please contact Kim Cloete at +27 82 4150736 or cloetek@yahoo.co.uk