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## **GSK's CEO, Andrew Witty dedicates Albendazole facility in Nashik to WHO's Global Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (LF)**

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Andrew Witty, GlaxoSmithKline's CEO, dedicated today the new albendazole manufacturing production line at its Nashik facility, to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (LF).

This facility reaffirms the healthcare company's commitment to global public health with a focus on diseases of the developing world. This new facility, built with an investment of Rs.15 million, will deliver an additional 300 million treatments of albendazole per year, being the largest drug donation programme in the history of the global pharmaceutical industry.

The global programme to eliminate LF has become the most rapidly scaled up drug administration programme in public health history. Since the programme began in 2000, more than 1.4 billion treatments have been given to over 500 million people in 48 of the 83 countries with endemic LF.

Worldwide more than 1.3 billion people live at risk of disability and disfigurement caused by LF, one-third of those at risk live in India. The cost to the Indian economy is estimated to exceed US\$840m every year due to treatment costs, reduced working time and lost productivity.

The Nashik facility will potentially save the Indian health system an estimated Rs. 1.38 billion (US\$ 30 million) in treatment costs and improve lives of 550 million people in India who live at risk of developing this debilitating condition.

The new Nashik facility will double GSK's annual manufacturing capacity for the LF programme. The technology for this plant was transferred from Cape Town and production started in August 2009. The first consignment of 15 million albendazole tablets was supplied to WHO on 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2009. This year Nashik is expected to deliver 300 million tablets.

**Andrew Witty, GlaxoSmithKline's CEO said:** "Thirty years ago, scientific breakthroughs led to the eradication of smallpox. Today we have hope that another disease, Lymphatic Filariasis, can be consigned to the history books. Promising new data show that the simplicity of the disease elimination programme is working. Through the investment in India we are able to focus on one of the largest areas at risk from LF and support the Indian Government's current efforts to control and eliminate this crippling tropical disease."

He added, "It is truly humbling to be a part of a programme that has managed to treat over 500 million people in 48 countries. GSK is proud of the role we have played in the LF programme and we are fully committed to ridding the world of this disease."

Since its initiation, the international effort to eliminate LF has made unprecedented strides towards ridding the world of one of its most debilitating diseases. The cost-efficiency combined with the programme's achievements have made the LF elimination effort a model for future large-scale international public health partnerships and has prompted calls for the development of a dedicated fund for the treatment and elimination of other neglected tropical diseases.

"We have been working towards the common goal of the elimination of LF with our partners in the Global Alliance for over a decade. This programme has demonstrated the power of partnership in the elimination of diseases of the developing world", said Andrew Witty.

As the Global Programme continues towards its goal of eliminating LF by 2020, the coming years will see additional rapid growth and expansion.

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**About lymphatic filariasis** – Lymphatic filariasis, often called elephantiasis, is a parasitic infection spread by mosquitoes that causes grotesque, painful swelling of the limbs, breasts, and genitals. Considered a neglected tropical disease, LF almost exclusively affects the world's poorest people. Approximately one fifth of the world's population (1.3 billion people) is at risk of contracting LF and approximately 120 million people in 83 countries are currently infected.

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