

Novartis Donates One Million Rands Worth of Medicines Towards Cholera Outbreak in Zimbabwe

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- *Collaboration of government, industry and NGO's vital for minimization and eradication of healthcare challenges*

Harare, 12 October, 2018 – Novartis has made a donation of medicines to the value of One Million Rands as a contribution towards the recent Cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe's capital city of Harare which has so far claimed the lives of 49 people in the capital city, five more in Buhera more recently and left 10 000 infected.

The donation, which was handed over at a ceremony at the Beatrice Road Infectious Diseases Hospital in Harare, comprised of antibiotics and pain management medicines. Novartis partnered with its division, Sandoz, a global leader in generic and biosimilar medicines and DSV, a world-leading supplier of transport and logistics services to make the donation possible. The medicines, which are enough to cover dosages for 15 000 patients, were received by Zimbabwe's Minister of Health and Child Care, Dr. Obadiah Moyo together with the Mayor of Harare, Herbert Gomba.

Dr. Moyo said the government of Zimbabwe had declared the Cholera outbreak in Harare as a State of Emergency because of the seriousness with which it takes the situation and in order to mobilize resources to contain the disease and other diarrheal diseases.

"As a government, the health of every citizen of Zimbabwe is our responsibility and priority. Declaring the Cholera outbreak as a State of Emergency is an indication of how seriously we have taken the epidemic. The Ministry of Health and Child Care has gone to great lengths to mobilize resources that will assist us to confine the disease and prevent it from spreading to other places.

"Our investigations on the cause of the outbreak are still ongoing. The findings should be a starting point for us to come up with strategies to ensure this does not happen again. We are extremely appreciative of partners such as Novartis, Sandoz and DSV for their responsiveness during this time," he said.

Dr. Patrice Matchaba, Group Head of Global Health and Corporate Responsibility for Novartis, said eliminating diseases is still one of the company's areas of focus. He said with its various long-running programs, Novartis has the opportunity to find ways of wiping out diseases especially given the level of investment the company has made towards Research and Development.

"As Novartis, our purpose is reimagining medicine to improve and extend people's lives. We have bent the disease burden curves in transplantation, heart failure, cancer, psoriasis, hypertension and cancer, changing medical practice around the world forever. The outbreak of Cholera in Zimbabwe is a reminder that we need to continue investing in Research and Development in order to tackle diseases such as leprosy, malaria and Cholera," said Dr. Matchaba.

Cholera is an infectious disease that causes severe watery diarrhea, which can lead to dehydration and even death if left untreated. It is caused by eating food or drinking water contaminated with a bacterium called *Vibrio cholerae*. At least 150,000 cases of Cholera are reported to the World Health Organization each year.

Symptoms of Cholera can begin as soon as a few hours or as long as five days after infection.

Common sources of Cholera include municipal water supplies, ice made from municipal water, foods and drinks sold by street vendors, vegetables grown with water containing human waste, raw or undercooked fish and seafood caught in waters polluted with sewage.

“The collaboration of government, industry and non-governmental organizations in tackling disease outbreaks and creating public awareness is important. It is only through partnerships that we can minimize and even eradicate some of society’s most difficult healthcare challenges. This handover of medicines is a demonstration of our commitment to medicines access in Zimbabwe,” concluded Dr. Matchaba.

Novartis is currently the third-largest multinational healthcare company on the continent. Novartis South Africa, with three divisions across Pharma – Innovative Medicines, Sandoz and Alcon, has been active in South Africa for over 70 years, and within that time has developed a strong clinical trial footprint in the country. As part of its efforts to support improved patient care, the company is training and developing internal teams and healthcare providers in Africa through a broad portfolio of development initiatives. Novartis invests in scientific capability development as part of an integrated strategy to strengthen healthcare systems in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMIC). The 2016 Access to Medicines Index committee acknowledges the company as an industry leader in capacity development for the comprehensive and innovative approach that consistently addresses local needs.

About Novartis

Novartis is reimagining medicine to improve and extend people’s lives. As a leading global medicines company, we use innovative science and digital technologies to create transformative treatments in areas of great medical need. In our quest to find new medicines, we consistently rank among the world’s top companies investing in research and development. Novartis products reach nearly 1 billion people globally and we are finding innovative ways to expand access to our latest treatments. About 125 000 people of more than 140 nationalities work at Novartis around the world. Find out more at <https://www.novartis.com>.

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