



## News Release

# ICAV Assembles Leading Scientists in Beijing To Accelerate Development of Novel Anti-Virals

November 4, 2008, Beijing, China

The International Consortium on Anti-Virals (ICAV) assembled over 100 leading scientists from around the world in Beijing in collaboration with the Chinese Academy of Sciences Institute of Microbiology (IMCAS) for its 7<sup>th</sup> International Symposium, “Challenging Pandemics: Science, Policy, Preparedness.” The symposium featured sessions on avian influenza, hepatitis, dengue, enteroviruses, and Herbomics, a Chinese program on naturally derived pharmaceuticals. The presentations featured presentations from leading scientists and policymakers from nine countries. The Chinese Minister of Health, Professor Zhu Chen, gave a keynote address at the opening Gala.

The objectives of the conference were to accelerate the development of novel, low-cost anti-virals for emerging and neglected diseases and to encourage scientific collaborations on focused, interdisciplinary research leading to novel anti-viral therapeutics.

“It was a true honour to host scientists from around the world to discuss such issues of critical importance for China and the world”, said Professor George Gao of IMCAS. “I am truly excited by the collaborations developed at this conference and their potential to aid in China's scientific development.”

Numerous new collaborations were fostered during the symposium, including among scientists from several European countries, Tunisia, Nigeria and Ghana to work on developing anti-virals for polio, as integral part of the global eradication strategy. An Memorandum of Understanding was signed between 10 institutions in Europe, Asia, Africa and North America to establish a West African Viral Surveillance Network that will foster research collaborations across the region. Professor Bamidele O. Solomon, the Director-General of the National Biotechnology Development Agency of the Nigerian Federal Government, hailed the establishment of WAVS as “an opportunity to strengthen research linkages of great importance to the health and development of Nigeria, West Africa, and ultimately global public health.”

An agreement in principle was reached to create national ICAV affiliates in selected countries around the world at a meeting of the ICAV International Steering Committee. The committee agreed to explore the possibility of creating national ICAV organizations in Australia, China, France, Germany, and Slovakia, building on each country's resources and expertise. “The establishment of national ICAVs builds on the fruitful international scientific collaborations established over the past four years”, said Dr. Jeremy Carver, co-founder and CEO of ICAV. “The establishment of national ICAV organizations will increase the scope and resources of ICAV—accelerating the development of urgently needed anti-viral therapeutics.” Dr. Michel Chrétien, co-founder of ICAV, added that “This brings us one step closer to realizing ICAV's goal of global scientific collaboration to solve some of the most devastating diseases of our world.”

The international steering committee agreed that the 8<sup>th</sup> ICAV symposium will be held in Marseille, France in September, 2009.

The symposium was sponsored by the Institute of Microbiology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (IMCAS), the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Research and Innovation, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), International Science and Technology Partnerships Canada Inc. (ISTP Canada), and Air Canada.

### **About ICAV and IMCAS**

ICAV is at the centre of pandemic preparedness and global public health, developing urgently needed, low-cost anti-virals. A not-for-profit drug development organization, ICAV accelerates the discovery, development and delivery of novel anti-viral therapies for neglected and emerging diseases through the international collaboration of scientists, government and industry. ICAV harvests promising drug candidates for pre-clinical and clinical development from its international network of over 250 scientists from 24 countries. ICAV ensures global availability of anti-virals by offering therapies at cost or for free in lower- and middle-income countries.

The Institute of Microbiology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (IMCAS) consists of five research departments, two state key laboratories and a CAS open laboratory. IMCAS employs over 310 staff including 240 senior scientists. Also affiliated with IMCAS is a fungal herbarium with a collection of 400,000 specimen (the largest of its kind in Asia), a culture collection of 30,000 isolates of microorganisms, a Fermentation Pilot Plant equipped for fermentation and post-fermentation processing, a new bio-technique Center equipped with modern biological instruments and a specialized library with collections of 60,000 volumes.

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