

September 27, 2023

**The Global Health Innovative Technology Fund provides grant for joint research into anti-malarial drugs with novel mechanisms of action conducted by Mitsubishi Tanabe Pharma and a malaria research institution**

Mitsubishi Tanabe Pharma Corporation (Head Office: Chuo-ku, Osaka; Representative Director: Akihiro Tsujimura; hereinafter, "MTPC"), a member of the Mitsubishi Chemical Group, has been conducting joint research with Medicines for Malaria Venture ("MMV"), a research institution focused on the treatment of malaria. Mitsubishi Tanabe Pharma has announced that a grant of ¥334 million will be provided by the Global Health Innovative Technology Fund ("GHIT Fund") for programs to create preclinical candidates for anti-malarial drugs with novel mechanisms of action.

The aim of this project is to create preclinical candidates of anti-malarial drugs that can be administered as a single dose and are effective in preventing *P. falciparum* malaria and *P. vivax* malaria or their recurrence in a 2-year program. In 2015, through the GHIT Fund, MTPC provided its pharmaceutical compound library (51,200 compounds) to MMV, and joint research was commenced. Since 2019, we have been optimizing 2 lead compounds as new anti-malarial drug candidates. The preclinical candidates we are aiming to create are derived from the results. In addition, for the evaluation of *Plasmodium vivax* malaria, the University of Georgia ("UGA") has joined as a new partner. And we will work on it as joint research between MMV, UGA, and MTPC.

Along with HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, malaria is one of the world's big three infectious diseases. The eradication of malaria is the target of Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals: "Good health and well-being." In addition, MTPC has identified "Access to healthcare" as one of the important material issues that it needs to address. We believe that a series of initiatives targeting malaria through the GHIT Fund will contribute to achieving the SDGs and increasing access to medicines in developing countries.

MTPC contributes to the realization of a sustainable society through the creation of pharmaceuticals that address unmet medical needs and will provide hopeful options for all people facing illness.

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## <Reference>

### ■ the Global Health Innovative Technology Fund (GHIT Fund)

The GHIT Fund is a Japan-based international public-private partnership fund (PPP) that was formed between the Government of Japan, multiple pharmaceutical companies, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Wellcome, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The GHIT Fund invests and manages an R&D portfolio of development partnerships aimed at addressing neglected diseases, such as malaria, tuberculosis, and neglected tropical diseases, which afflict the world's vulnerable and underserved populations. In collaboration with global partners, the GHIT Fund mobilizes Japanese industry, academia, and research institutes to create new drugs, vaccines, and diagnostics for malaria, tuberculosis, and neglected tropical diseases.

<https://www.ghitfund.org/en>

### ■ Malaria

Malaria is caused by a parasite from the genus *Plasmodium*, which caused approximately 627,000 deaths in 2020. In humans, five species of *Plasmodium* are known to cause the disease. Of particular relevance are *P. falciparum*, which is the most lethal and accounts for 93% of cases in sub-Saharan Africa and *P. vivax* which is prevalent in Southeast Asia and the Americas and causes post-treatment disease relapse due to a latent liver form of the parasite. Current antimalarial control is highly dependent on artemisinin combination therapies (ACTs), and it is concerning that decreased parasite sensitivity has emerged to all currently-used ACTs, leading to significant failure rates in parts of Southeast Asia where partner drug resistance is evident. If resistance becomes widespread in Africa (where most deaths occur), a major health crisis is feared.