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Novartis to provide innovative medicines to SSA

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The strategy is aligned with the Novartis Access Principles, which aim to systematically integrate access strategies in how the company researches, develops and delivers medicines globally



Novartis announced a new strategy to broaden patient reach and availability of its portfolio of medicines in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), which is home to the largest underserved patient population in the world. Novartis also aspires to be the partner of choice for governments and NGOs to strengthen healthcare systems across Africa.

“We are deeply committed to improving access to medicines around the world,” says Vas Narasimhan, CEO of Novartis. “Building on our longstanding efforts to improving health in Africa, including on malaria and sickle cell disease, we’re taking a comprehensive approach to ensuring patients in sub-Saharan Africa, regardless of income, have access to our portfolio of medicines.”

As part of the new strategy, Novartis will pivot the current organizational focus in SSA from financial metrics such as sales performance and profits, to metrics that drive access to innovative medicines and strengthen health systems in the region. A new organizational unit will bring together the expertise and portfolio of our Sandoz Division, the Novartis Pharmaceuticals and Oncology business units comprising our Innovative Medicines Division and Novartis Social Business. Racey Muchilwa is appointed Head of Global Health SSA, contributing her strong knowledge of the healthcare system and patient needs in the region.

The SSA unit aims to maximize patient reach across the full income pyramid by focusing on tiered pricing models, competitiveness in tenders and scaling social business models as well as affordability strategies. Novartis also will work to increase its clinical trial capabilities, and accelerate regulatory and administrative processes in the region to shorten the time between the development, approval and ultimately access to new medicines for patients across SSA.

Novartis has a long-standing commitment to helping improve health of people in Africa. This includes communicable diseases such as malaria and leprosy as well as non-communicable diseases such as sickle cell disease (SCD), cardiovascular disease and cancer. Novartis has contributed nearly 900 million courses of malaria treatment at no-profit to patients in malaria-endemic countries, including more than 380 million doses of our pediatric formulation. Novartis is also pioneering research and development with clinical trials, utilizing novel biologic molecules and deploying new technologies to provide the benefits of cutting-edge innovation to the region. Most recently, the company announced a broad public-private partnership with the government of Ghana to tackle sickle cell disease, including access to available medicine, clinical research and use of digital technologies to achieve global standards of care.