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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF TROPICAL MEDICINE AND HYGIENE

111 Deer Lake Road, Suite 100
Deerfield, IL 60015 USA
+1-847-480-9592
FAX +1-847-480-9282
info@astmh.org
www.astmh.org

ASTMH PRESS STATEMENT

Media contact:

Jeff Keller

jkeller@astmh.org +1 847/480-9592, ext. 357

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Response to London Declaration for NTDs: New Pledge by Key International Partners* to Combat 10 Neglected Tropical Diseases by 2020

Statement by:

James W. Kazura, MD

President, ASTMH; Professor and Director, Center for Global Health and Diseases, Case Western Reserve University

Peter J. Hotez, MD, PhD

Past President, ASTMH; Founding Dean, National School of Tropical Medicine, Baylor College of Medicine; President, Sabin Vaccine Institute

(Deerfield, Ill., USA – January 30, 2012) - “Our members and researchers around the world applaud this unprecedented level of international cooperation to improve the lives of the 1.4 billion people around the world who are disabled, blinded and suffer needlessly from neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). The announcement today in London to make this commitment is even more promising given the diversity of those committed; for-profits and non-profits, world health organizations, donors and nations representing a wide economic development range.

While enormous strides have been made over the last two decades to control and even eliminate NTDs, we’ve long needed a ‘manifesto’ like this for accelerating the global assault on these diseases. NTDs are some of the most important diseases you’ve never heard of. They affect one in six people around the world, and not only thrive in the setting of poverty but perpetuate it.

It may seem an audacious goal, but as researchers and vaccine developers, we have the technical ability to eliminate the most common NTDs as public health problems. ASTMH and its members have long been committed to this goal. But we cannot make progress without political will and support for science and research. We are uplifted by the commitments and innovative partnerships unveiled today because they set the stage for us to be able to expand our efforts and spur the scientific innovation needed to boost the production of new drugs, diagnostics, vaccines and other treatments necessary to rid the world of tropical diseases.”

**The partnership includes 13 pharmaceutical companies; Bill Gates; WHO Director General Margaret Chan; senior officials from donor and NTD-endemic countries, leaders from the World Bank; and others.*

American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, founded in 1903, is a worldwide organization of scientists, clinicians and program professionals whose mission is to promote global health through the prevention and control of infectious and other diseases that disproportionately afflict the global poor.