

## Diseases and poverty, summary (optional)

HIV-AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis: these three poverty-linked diseases kill daily in Africa and seriously compromise development of the continent. The European Union has decided to react by launching a broad research and development platform for vaccines and medicines. This joint platform of 14 Member States and Norway will coordinate and finance clinical trials in Africa south of the Sahara. This pooling of efforts is totally new in European research. For the first time too, African countries are invited to take part in the preparatory stages to determine their specific needs and future actions in the field. On 19 April, the Barcelona conference will give the official launch -- scientific and political -- to the preparatory work for this initiative. The European and Developing Countries Clinical Trial Platform (EDCPT for short) will be one of the largest European research projects for the next framework programme. For five years, the European Community proposes to invest some 200 million euros plus funds from the national programmes of Member States, development funds and donations from foundations. Spain, which is coordinating this phase of the work, hopes that the platform will be operational in 2003.

### Diseases and poverty (voice off)

1. TC: 3.00.00

Overviews of Africa, shots of dispensaries

**HIV-AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis: these are the greatest scourges for developing countries, with a major impact on public health and the economy of the countries. Every year, more than five million victims die from these diseases. Africa south of the Sahara particularly suffers from these three diseases associated with the poverty of the population. The situation is so critical that the European Commission has decided to react by launching a broad platform to accelerate research and development in vaccines and medicines specifically for and with these African countries.**

2. TC: 03.30.17

Interview Dr. Antoni Trilla

Director of Epidemiology Assessment and Prevention Unit (UASP)

EDCTP coordinator

Hospital Clinic

Barcelona

Spain

*"The idea is that Europe can contribute to better control, better prevention and better treatment of these diseases in developing countries by means of a series of programmes specially directed to research and development, including clinical trials to create medicines, vaccines and other health-care interventions."*

3. TC: 03.48.19

Shots of the EDCTP meeting in Brussels

**Here in Brussels, and also in Addis Ababa last December, the European and Developing Countries Critical Trials Platform, abbreviated EDCTP, has held preparatory meetings so the project can be officially launched on 19 April in Barcelona in a conference jointly**

**organized by the Spanish Presidency and the European Commission. This is an ambitious project. Fourteen European countries and Norway are around the table. Europe has pooled all its strength.**

4. TC:04.20.14

Interview Philippe Busquin  
EU Research Commissioner  
Belgium

*"In Europe, every country does research and develops actions. But if these programmes are developed together and are mutually coherent, the value added will be considerable. The effect will in fact be much more significant and much more determinant for these research projects which, for the moment, are too fragmented, and do not always result in a coherent project."*

5. TC: 04.49.21

Interview Dr. Antoni Trilla

*"The instruments of the sixth framework programme for research in Europe include the possibility of using article 169. What this does is transmit initiative to Member States. These Member States can then decide to deal with a problem of a particular amplitude like the one posed by these diseases. This is probably a good example of the possibility of using article 169 to construct the European research area."*

6. TC: 05.21.08

Shots of the EDCTP meeting (zoom on the African representatives)

**This pooling of national programmes is a first in the history of European research. And that's not all, developing countries are part of the steering group and take part in the conception of the project. This is a real step forward in North/south relations.**

7. TC: 05.36.09

Interview Professor Fred Binka  
Chairman In-depth Network  
School of Public Health  
University of Ghana  
Legon  
Ghana

*« This is a great opportunity. This has never happened in the past. Programmes have always been drawn and we have been invited to participate. In this case, we are bringing our knowledge and our knowledge of local institutions to design things right from scratch. This programme is not yet launched so this is a big opportunity trying to draw on the African experience and make sure that this programme is designed in such a way that it satisfies our needs and aspirations. »*

8.TC: 06.04.05

Interview Dr. Ricardo Thompson

CISM - University of Health and National Institute of Health, Faculty of Medicine. University Eduardo Mondlane

Maputo

Mozambique

*"It is very important for us to be here and to take part in the process from the outset. Because in this way, we will understand how the countries of the European Commission work together, how collaboration goes on between them. Only in this way, will we be able to work with them. It's much easier when we understand the rules and the advantages of working together."*

9. TC: 06.25.10

Images of African school children

**EDCTP, a true bridge between Europe and Africa, is based on strong partnerships. Concretely, this means that for African countries the work is already starting, with information and prevention missions.**

10. TC: 06.39.08

Interview Fred Binka

*« So we've started now with the scientific community making sure that the African scientists know about this programme, understand what's been decided and make an input on how it should be framed. Our second target is to make sure our local communities, our ministeries of health and the common people, the mothers, the childrens who are in the villages have the opportunity to benefit from this pilot project that we are about to start. »*

AA. TC: 07.04.12

Interview Dr. Francine N'Toumi

Medical Research Unit

Albert Schweitzer Hospital

Lambarene

Gabon

*"To fight disease, we must focus on prevention and treatment. And from this standpoint, training is an extremely significant aspect. This means that we must train and inform. These two components are very important in the European platform project."*

12. TC: 07.24.17

Images of vaccination in an African village

**Then we have the tests themselves. Each new medicine or vaccine will be tested on specific sites. The African countries are confronted with two things. First: the need to be able to carry out these trials completely in their territories. All of this is a question of development of structures and training of human resources. Second: that these trials must not be done in a haphazard way. Ethical rules and good medical practice must be observed. African scientists are well aware this.**

13.TC: 07.51.13

Interview Dr. Ricardo Thompson

*"Whenever trails are to be started, a fundamental aspect must be taken into account -- this is the ethical aspect. The populations must be asked to collaborate and must accept inoculation of a specific product or specific medicine. The ethical aspect includes all these propositions. Moreover, the process of obtaining ethical consent requires clear information of communities on the objectives of the intervention, the advantages that they can expect, the benefits for themselves as well as for developing countries in general."*

14. TC:08.32.13

Images of European pharmacies/images of health-care in a small African village

**Today, remedies for these three diseases exist in Western countries. But the situation is entirely different in developing countries: although medicines are present on the market, the price is nevertheless exorbitant and unaffordable for the vast majority of the population. What is more, the medicines are not always designed for local needs.**

15. TC: 09.05.08

Interview professor Wes Kilama

Coordinator

African Malaria Vaccine Testing Network

Dar es Salaam

Tanzania

*« In vaccins also, the malarial vaccine candidates that have received a lot of attention by industry have been the vaccines for short time travellers to Africa. For example : business people, tourists and investors. Those people can pay but the types of vaccines that are targeted to assist our poor population have received hardly any attention. »*

16. TC:09.36.62

Interview Dr. Ricardo Thompson

*"There's a complicated relationship between poverty and disease. We are poor and we cannot fight these diseases. And we continue to suffer from them chronically. And because we suffer from these diseases, we cannot manage to overcome poverty. This is the vicious circle that we must try to break. That's why this type of initiative is very important for us."*

17. TC: 10.03.00

Images of a European laboratory

**Then there is the economic aspect for European laboratories. The final objective of EDCTP is to help African countries break the spiral of poverty and disease, but the programme also targets encouraging laboratories to be more active in research on AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Without necessarily thinking in terms of return.**

18 TC: 10.25.10

Interview Philippe Busquin

*"It is important for the public authorities to initiate the process because clearly there will not necessarily be an industrial return at the first level. If we want this to be affordable for everyone, a coordinated effort must support the development of medicines and the implementation of clinical tests, which of course also interest those who will be asked to produce these medicines tomorrow. So that they can be distributed under the best possible conditions."*

19. TC: 10.59.20

Images outside the European Parliament in Brussels

**EDCTP is one of the largest European research projects. Over a five-year period, the Commission proposes to invest 200 million euros to which national programmes of Member States, development funds and donations from foundations will be added. Spain, which is currently coordinating the preparatory work, hopes that the platform will be operational in 2003.**