



LONDON FORUM TARGETS AFRICA'S CANCER CRISIS: IAEA-OXFORD UNIVERSITY¹

4 May 2007.- Africa stands on the brink of a cancer epidemic, with more than a million new cases a year by 2020. Raising awareness of the threat is one of the biggest challenges facing the global health community today. Finding solutions is an even greater one. The University of Oxford's Africa-Oxford Cancer Consortium (AfrOx), together with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), is assembling some of the world's most prominent cancer experts and policymakers in London, UK, on 10-11 May, 2007, to take up the challenge.

Cancer care services in Africa are desperately limited. Life-saving radiotherapy, which is used effectively on more than 50% of cancer patients in the developed world, is available in only 21 of Africa's 53 countries, or to less than 20% of the total population. Lack of resources and basic infrastructure mean that millions of people have no access to cancer screening, early diagnosis, treatment or palliative care. Moreover, nearly 45% of cancer deaths in Africa are due to rampant viral infection, poor nutrition and widespread tobacco use.

"Many lives in Africa could be saved through prevention strategies and investments in comprehensive cancer control," says Massoud Samiei, Head of the IAEA's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT). "PACT seeks to mobilize new resources and enable African countries to expand radiotherapy and cancer care in a sustainable manner."

The *Cancer Control in Africa* meeting will focus on Africa's deepening cancer crisis and develop strategies for much-needed national cancer control programmes. It will also act as a forum for cancer experts and health policymakers to evaluate priorities, guided by needs and available resources.

¹ Tomado de <http://www.iaea.org/pact/index.asp>

By holding the meeting in London, the organizers hope to place the African problem at the forefront of the global health agenda and to enlist support and new funding from European governments to fight cancer in Africa through joint international programmes.

“We have a timely opportunity to develop a sustainable model for bringing comprehensive cancer care to African countries,” says David Kerr of the University of Oxford and AfrOx. “We will build partnerships between established developing cancer networks, provide educational and research opportunities and a utilitarian ethos that values the care of cancer patients equally, around the globe.”

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 12.5% of all deaths worldwide are caused by cancer—more than from HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria combined. Once considered a disease of the rich, the pendulum has swung dramatically and some 70% of new cancer cases in the next decade will be in the developing world. But faced with multiple health challenges, many poor countries are unable to cope with the accelerating burden of cancer. WHO is calling for a concerted effort to translate current knowledge on cancer into action in order to save lives and prevent greater suffering.

PACT was launched by the IAEA in 2004 in response to the developing world’s growing cancer crisis and in support of the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) and WHO’s call for action. While drawing on the IAEA’s expertise in delivering radiotherapy technology and skills to those most in need, PACT’s objective is to contribute to a global alliance to help low and middle income countries fight cancer on a broad, multi-disciplinary front. PACT is currently partnering several organizations* including WHO, and is working towards closer cooperation with the European Union (EU) in the field of cancer prevention and control in Africa.

AfrOx is a new organization dedicated to bringing comprehensive cancer care to Africa. It will act in partnership with IAEA/PACT and other organizations in raising international awareness of the magnitude of the cancer epidemic and will work to develop sustainable national cancer plans that are evidence-based and resource-appropriate for African countries.

Werner Burkart, IAEA Deputy Director General, will attend the meeting, which will be chaired by Alan Milburn, former UK Secretary of State for Health. One of the key speakers is Hilary Benn, UK Secretary of State for International Development.

Cancer Control in Africa is limited to 140 delegates. Those attending are central to the implementation of cancer strategies. They include 19 African Health Ministries, from Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Gabon, Ghana, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia. Also invited are leading African doctors and health professionals, many of the world’s foremost oncologists, UK government members and advisors, cancer organizations and charities (World Health Organization (WHO), International

Network for Cancer Treatment and Research (INCTR), U.S. National Cancer Institute (NCI), American Cancer Society (ACS), International Union Against Cancer (UICC), African Organization for Research and Training in Cancer (AORTIC), National Cancer Research Institute, UK, Breakthrough Breast Cancer, African Palliative Care Association and Help the Hospices), representatives from the pharmaceutical industry (GSK, Roche, Novartis, GE Healthcare and Eli Lilly), the Gates Foundation, the African Development Bank and investment bankers.

London Forum Pledges Support for Africa Cancer Plan

18 May 2007

Leading cancer experts and policymakers meeting in London, UK, on 10-11 May voiced support for an action plan designed to tackle Africa's growing cancer crisis.

The [London Declaration on Cancer Control in Africa](#) resulted from a two-day forum dedicated to raising awareness of the crisis and finding strategies for effective, sustainable solutions. African officials, health professionals, international organizations and cancer charities all agreed such a Declaration was crucial to building momentum from the meeting.

"The last two days have been marked by an enormous sense of goodwill and shared endeavour to deal with a problem that is huge and which, without action, can only grow," said Alan Milburn, British MP and chairman of the meeting. "We will seek to galvanize a range of support to make sure we can turn good intent into firm action,"

The London Declaration builds on two earlier documents—the [Cape Town Declaration on Cancer Control in Africa \(IAEA, December 2006\)](#) and the [World Cancer Declaration \(UICC, July 2006\)](#). The London blueprint sets out six essential elements for comprehensive cancer control programmes:

- Cancer surveillance/registries and national cancer plans
- Prevention programmes
- Early diagnosis and screening programmes
- Treatment
- Palliative care
- Training and Research

According to the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), 12.5% of all deaths worldwide are caused by cancer — that's more than from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined. Experts warn that new cases will double within the next 20 years, 70% of them in developing countries, unless action is taken now. In Africa, over-burdened health systems are often unable to deliver cancer care services and more than half a million people currently die of the disease each year. Yet, tragically, one third of all cancers in Africa are preventable and another third are curable under the right conditions.



"African health ministers and professionals are an extremely dedicated team of people. They are aware of the problems and the scale of the suffering," said

Massoud Samiei, Head of PACT. “We have the means to help them. But if we don’t create an international forum for tackling this crisis, for many there will be no chance of survival.”

The London meeting was organised jointly by the [University of Oxford’s Africa Consortium \(AfrOx\)](#) and IAEA/PACT. While pledging to “prevent the preventable and cure the curable”, all partners to the London Declaration agreed that such a commitment can only succeed as part of a collaborative effort. PACT draws on the IAEA’s long experience in delivering radiation technology and cancer management systems to the world’s poorest nations. Since it was founded in 2004, PACT has been working towards building just such a global alliance to fight cancer in the developing world.

The London meeting attracted 130 participants, including:

- African Health Ministers or their representatives
- African and international leading oncologists
- Members of the UK parliament
- Representatives from the pharmaceutical industry.
- International organisations and charities:
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 - [African Development Bank](#)
 - [African Organisation for Research and Training in Cancer \(AORTIC\)](#)
 - [African Palliative Care Association](#)
 - [American Cancer Society \(ACS\)](#)
 - [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#)
 - [Breakthrough Breast Cancer](#)
 - [Cancer Research UK \(CR UK\)](#)
 - [European Society for Medical Oncology \(ESMO\)](#)
 - [Global Health Workforce Alliance\(GHWA\)](#)
 - [Help the Hospices](#)
 - [International Agency for Research on Cancer \(IARC\)](#)
 - [International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)](#) through its [Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy \(PACT\)](#)
 - [International Network for Cancer Treatment and Research \(INCTR\)](#)
 - [International Society of Paediatric Oncology \(SIOP\)](#)
 - [International Union Against Cancer \(UICC\)](#)
 - [Medical Research Council \(MRC\)](#)
 - [National Cancer Institute \(NCI\) \(U.S.A.\)](#)
 - [National Cancer Research Institute \(NCRI\) \(U.K.\)](#)
 - [Organisation of European Cancer Institutes \(OECI\)](#)
 - [Oxfam](#)
 - [Princess Nikky Breast Cancer Foundation](#)
 - [Tropical Health and Education Trust \(THET\)](#)
 - [University of Oxford \(through: AfrOx\)](#)
 - [World Bank](#)
 - [World Health Organization](#)
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