

Paris pharmaceutical conference addresses doping in sport

Paris, 13.11.2012 – Representatives from the pharmaceutical industry, public authorities and anti-doping community gathered at a ground-breaking conference in Paris to explore ways to enhance the fight against doping in sport and restrict the misuse of licensed and unlicensed medicines.

'The International Conference on the Pharmaceutical Industry and the Fight against Doping: New Partnerships for Clean Sport' at the French Parliament House was the first event of its kind and laid the foundations for increased co-operation between public authorities, the pharmaceutical industry and the world's anti-doping community.

It was hosted by the Ministry of Sports, Youth, Non Formal Education and Voluntary Organizations of France, and co-organized by the Council of Europe, UNESCO and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

French Minister for Sport, Valérie Fourneyron, welcomed 250 participants to the Conference, which was also attended by the Council of Europe's Deputy Secretary General, Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, UNESCO Deputy Director General, Getachew Engida, IOC President, Jacques Rogge, and WADA President, John Fahey.

Opening the morning session Minister Fourneyron declared "this symposium marks a pivotal moment for acknowledging the pressing need for as much collaboration as possible between the pharmaceutical industry and anti-doping authorities.

"The extent and pace of advances in cooperation between partners who have to meet both individual and collective interests will depend on our collective ability to respond adequately to a certain number of issues.

"I am convinced we will be able to find positive answers and that, in the future, this symposium will be a seminal step in bringing together two worlds that are not always accustomed to working together, but whose collaboration will be key to building and enforcing cleaner sport in the future."

Participating in the conference were representatives from the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (IFPMA), the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) and some of the leading pharmaceutical companies worldwide.

Doping in sport is an ongoing issue that in recent years has become a problem for wider society, and the Conference looked at ways to develop further partnerships between the pharmaceutical industry and anti-doping authorities to help stem the rise.

Respective agreements already exist between WADA and F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd, GlaxoSmithKline, and the IFPMA, and the conference examined possibilities for further co-operation.

"A crucial part of WADA's strategy is to develop partnerships with organizations that have the expertise to help find solutions, as well as having a vested interest in stopping the abuse of substances," said Mr. Fahey.

"I am excited by the potential of such cooperation and applaud the responsible efforts of the pharmaceutical industry as it looks to limit the abuse of its products. This debate is of great significance to the anti-doping community."

An obvious and proven means of the pharmaceutical industry assisting the anti-doping community is by sharing information on pipeline products that have the potential for misuse.

Such information has proven to be extremely valuable in helping the early development of detection methods, as was the case when WADA contributed to the sanctioning of a number of athletes who took the prohibited substance CERA at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

CERA, a third-generation erythropoiesis-stimulating agent, was developed by Roche, which collaborated with WADA so that a test could be developed for the analysis of athlete samples from Beijing.

"This International Conference also showed the importance of strengthening ties between the Council of Europe, UNESCO and WADA, in particular through mutual recognition of the various legal frameworks available," said Ms. Battaini-Dragoni.

"By involving industrial stakeholders, this initiative will nicely round out the Council of Europe Convention provision on the counterfeiting of medicines to the greatest benefit of all the partners. The application of the MEDICRIME Convention will help prevent the erosion of pharmaceutical industry revenues, which in turn will allow WADA to be more responsive to new developments.

"Working hand in hand, in partnerships to which each party will bring its added value, while recognizing and making good use of all the other instruments available, will make the fight against doping even more effective and credible."

The Conference consisted of two sessions, during which there was an examination of the societal and economic risks of doping, and the impact it can have on the health industry. Representatives also looked at ways to raise awareness among pharmaceutical companies that have not yet been engaged in the fight against doping in sport.

Other means of contributing to the anti-doping cause – such as a framework for future co-operation between WADA and the health sector, and possible funding for relevant anti-doping research – were also discussed.

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