

News Centre

[Top Stories](#)

[Feature Stories](#)

[In Focus](#)

[Press Releases](#)

[Media Advisories](#)

[Statements](#)

[IAEA Meetings](#)

[Multimedia](#)

[Transcripts](#)

IAEA Press Releases

Press Release 2010/06

Roche and IAEA Announce Joint Initiative to Train Healthcare Workers for Africa's Fight Against Cancer **EDUCARE Partnership to Launch IAEA's VUCCnet Training Networks**

Basel, 28 April 2010 | Roche and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) announced today the launch of the EDUCARE (EDUcation for Cancer in African REGions) project to provide concerted support to help combat the growing cancer epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa.

The EDUCARE project is to be piloted in Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, and is linked with the IAEA's wider initiative to build regional training networks in cancer control and a Virtual University for Cancer Control (VUCCnet) in Africa. A core component for the successful fight against cancer in any country is the education and training of health care providers. The VUCCnet will allow for training to be provided in an integrated and sustainable way in Africa by taking advantage of low-cost online learning tools.

The IAEA is working in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other international partners to develop the VUCCnet across Africa. The EDUCARE project will facilitate a first-of-its-kind exchange of knowledge and skills, both at the healthcare provider and country-wide level. Training will be provided by an on-line training resource centre, known as the Virtual University for Cancer Control (VUCC), the first such platform for health workers across the continent.

Maturin Tchoumi, General Manager Roche South Africa said: "As a leader in oncology, Roche believes that its strengths, expertise and resources can be used to improve the quality of oncology training and education in the poorest countries in the world. There is a real lack of basic education in oncology in Africa. By contributing our skills and competencies on the ground, Roche can make a real and sustainable improvement."

This new public-private partnership reflects a shared concern over the increasing cancer burden in sub-Saharan Africa, a region of the world where cancer rates are growing rapidly. Cancer now accounts for 12.5% of all deaths worldwide, more than HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria combined. By 2020, there are expected to be 15 million new cases of cancer every year, 70% of which will be in developing countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, the lack of trained healthcare workers in oncology has been cited as one of the key barriers to improved healthcare.

The partnership was formed under the stewardship of the IAEA's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT). PACT is an innovative programme that seeks to scale-up the IAEA's cancer control assistance to low- and middle-income countries by ensuring that investments in cancer diagnosis and treatment are embedded within national comprehensive cancer control plans (NCCP). The donation from Roche, in addition to financial support from the Government of the United States and the IAEA, will allow for the pilot phase of the VUCCnet to be implemented in Africa.

Mr. Massoud Samiei, Director of the PACT Programme, emphasized the critical importance of training African cancer control specialists: "The IAEA's experience with assisting low- and middle-income countries to develop cancer control diagnosis and treatment capacity has taught us that infrastructure and technology can only be useful when managed by knowledgeable and professionally trained staff. PACT and its partners have developed the VUCCnet in order to facilitate access to more training, to allow African health care workers to be trained on best practices for cancer control in their home countries and regions, and to build a sustainable mentorship network for continuous professional development."

In addition to financial support, Roche and the IAEA will work towards utilizing the expertise and skills of Roche employees by facilitating and implementing the education and training initiative. The partners have committed to a five-year plan, working together to achieve wider participation from healthcare workers in the four countries involved in the project. EDUCARE aims to reach over 200 healthcare workers in the first

year of the programme.

About the Initiative

The EDUCARE programme will be governed and managed by an expert steering committee of representatives from Roche, the IAEA and WHO. The programme will be piloted in Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, all of which will be able to learn from each other and transfer cancer control skills.

The main priorities of the programme will be as follows:

- Establishing a regional training network by linking cancer centres of competence within the pilot countries and conducting training through the network;
- Assisting in the design and implementation of a comprehensive cancer control curricula that is appropriate for the specific needs of the four pilot countries; and
- Virtual University for Cancer Control (VUCC): Implementing a web-based portal for delivery of curriculum content and establishing a certification process.

The launch of the EDUCARE initiative will be marked with an initial meeting scheduled for May, involving the IAEA, Roche, the WHO and participating pilot country representatives. To initiate the VUCCnet, Roche and the IAEA will focus on enhancing the skills at cancer centres in each of the pilot countries. Through an intense training programme for healthcare workers taking place over five years, the EDUCARE project will provide resources and support to establish four pilot centres as recognized National Cancer Centres of Competence. It is estimated that each Cancer Centre of Competence will enable access to diagnostic testing and cancer treatment for a catchment area of approximately five million people.

About Roche

Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Roche is a leader in research-focused healthcare with combined strengths in pharmaceuticals and diagnostics. Roche is the world's largest biotech company with truly differentiated medicines in oncology, virology, inflammation, metabolism and CNS. Roche is also the world leader in in-vitro diagnostics, tissue-based cancer diagnostics and a pioneer in diabetes management. Roche's personalised healthcare strategy aims at providing medicines and diagnostic tools that enable tangible improvements in the health, quality of life and survival of patients. In 2009, Roche had over 80 000 employees worldwide and invested almost 10 billion Swiss francs in R&D. The Group posted sales of 49.1 billion Swiss francs. Genentech, United States, is a wholly owned member of the Roche Group. Roche has a majority stake in Chugai Pharmaceutical, Japan. For more information: www.roche.com.

All trademarks used or mentioned in this release are protected by law.

Press Contacts

IAEA:

Dana Sacchetti
Press Officer
IAEA Division of Public Information
[43-1] 2600-26523 (Office)
[43] 699-165-26523 (Mobile)
d.sacchetti@iaea.org and [Press Section of the IAEA's Website](http://www.iaea.org/Press)

Roche:

Alexander Klauser
Martina Rupp
Claudia Schmitt
Nina Schwab-Hautzinger
Roche Group Media Relations
[41] 61 688 8888
basel.mediaoffice@roche.com

About the IAEA

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) serves as the world's foremost intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the peaceful use of nuclear technology. Established as an

autonomous organization under the United Nations (UN) in 1957, the IAEA carries out programmes to maximize the useful contribution of nuclear technology to society while verifying its peaceful use.

NOTE TO EDITORS: For additional information visit the Press Section of the IAEA's website (<http://www.iaea.org/Resources/Journalists/>), or call the IAEA's Division of Public Information at (431) 2600-21270.

Copyright ©, Vienna International Centre, PO Box 100, 1400 Vienna, Austria
Telephone (+431) 2600-0; Facsimilie (+431) 2600-7; E-mail:
[Disclaimer](#)