

Minister Pandor,
Commissioner Geoghean-Quinn,
Minister Malas,
Professor Mocumbi,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Acknowledgements and Self-Presentation

To begin with, let me congratulate the South African Department for Science & Technology and the European Commission for having organised this conference. It is a great honour to have been invited to speak before you today.

Before going further, let me say a few words about myself. Having worked as a scientist for most of my career, I went on to work as Minister of Science, Innovation and Higher Education in Portugal – and, in this capacity, I was directly involved in 2003 in the negotiations and in the approval in the Competitiveness Council of the EDCTP1. It was also during this time that I had the honour of presenting the candidacy of Pascoal Mocumbi – the second of our speakers this morning – when Mr Mocumbi was appointed as a high representative to the EDCTP.

I currently work as a member of the European Parliament, where I sit on the Industry, Research and Energy Committee as well as on the Budget Committee. I am also president of the Committee on Economic Development, Finance and Trade of the Delegation to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. In this capacity, I have a direct interest in questions related to the issues we are discussing today.

Moreover, as rapporteur for the Specific Programme implementing Horizon 2020, the present conference is of particular interest to my activity in the Parliament. I very much look forward to listening to the different speakers and to learning about how we, in the European Union, might improve our contribution to the EDCTP – one that has been remarkably fruitful for all parties involved.

Main Purpose

In speaking to you today, I should like to consider EDCTP II in the light of the current negotiations concerning Horizon 2020. In this context, I shall begin by outlining some of the achievements of the EDCTP. I should then like to give an overview of H2020 in terms of its key principles and structure before finishing with a brief consideration of the way in which an improved framework programme will impact positively on EDCTP II

The Achievements of the EDCTP

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With regard to the achievements of the EDCTP, the EDCTP plays a exemplary role in European Union's international cooperation. The EDCTP has proven itself to be remarkably effective in improving medical intervention and the quality of the research designed to combat poverty-related diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Moreover, as the first programme to be launched under the article 169 (presently article 185) initiative, EDCTP has succeeded in establishing a genuine partnership with its African partners. This involves capacity strengthening and competence development; multi-disiplinary collaboration and trans-national support as well as the drawing up of agreed common rules for selecting and funding clinical research.

In the process, the African partners have retained a high degree of ownership and leadership: African experts coordinate more than half of the 57 clinical trials carried out and have been awarded three quarters of EDCTP funding. Similarly, the initiative has helped train hundreds of African researchers and medical doctors through its fellowship programme and other training schemes. At the same time, EDCTP funding aims to foster clinical research in Africa in a sound ethical and regulatory environment. As such, it is an indispensable pre-condition for carrying out clinical trials meeting international standards. Consequently, the programme has proven itself to be a model that will guide us in the future efforts that remain to be made in combining our forces.

2) *Horizon 2020*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

General Principles

At this point let me give you an overall idea of the state of play, the general principles and the structure of the new framework programme H2020. As things stand, we are in the process of finalising six Horizon 2020 reports in preparation for the decision on the overall funding and structure of the programme. These reports will be voted on the 28 November in ITRE Committee. This will then be followed by trilogues between the Parliament, Commission and Council from the middle of December onwards.

With regard to the general principles, as I see it, there are 3 key notions. The programme involves:

~ Firstly, a trust based funding system. This entails a simpler FP with fewer instruments alongside a radical overhaul of the administration of the FP. Over the years, the framework programmes have grown in scope both in terms of its applications and the size of its budget. The swelling number of applications for funding has been met with a parallel growth in control mechanisms in an attempt to ensure the proper use of EU funds. The unfortunate result is that it is increasingly difficult for the different entities that might contribute to find their way through a labyrinth of rules, procedures and ramifying red tape. It is for this reason that European Institutions have made efforts to replace the current system with one that places greater trust in the applicants with much simpler financial and administrative rules.

~ Secondly, one of the most important features of the new programme is that it aims couple research to innovation and hence to move from initial research to the market or "from research to retail". Significantly, this is the first framework programme to seek to master and fund the whole innovation cycle.

~ Thirdly, the European Commission and European Parliament have proposed a substantial increase of budget for research and innovation. The European Commission has advanced a figure

of €80 billion as part of the post- 2013 7-year budget package. The next step will involve tough negotiations between the main three European Institutions, Parliament, Council and the Commission. While a number of European countries support a figure at the higher end of this spectrum, it is to be hoped that other governments will follow this lead especially those countries with a reputation for academic excellence.

Structure

As for the structure of the new programme, this is certainly much improved by comparison with FP7 and involves a satisfactory balance between the three pillars of

- * firstly, excellence in science
- * secondly, industrial leadership and
- * finally, societal challenges

The third pillar covers cooperative research projects addressing seven major societal challenges. The first of these is “Health, demographic changes and well-being” and it is here that combating poverty related diseases are to be found. Indeed, the sub-section entitled “***Developing new and better preventive vaccines and drugs***”, clearly states that there is a need for more effective preventive vaccines and evidence-based vaccination schemes for an expanded range of diseases, ***including poverty-related diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected diseases***. This supposes a better understanding of disease and disease processes and their consequent epidemics, more predictive and efficient pre-clinical safety assessments and the undertaking of clinical trials and associated studies.

In this pillar, health is recognised as one of the most important societal challenges with, consequently, the single largest budget in this pillar. This currently amounts to a little over € billion out of which sum, Horizon 2020 will directly contribute to the funding of the EDCTP.

However, Horizon 2020 should be more than a simple funding programme. It should lead, by its very nature, to improving the planning and delivery of the solutions that we propose. In this respect, in the different reports that have so far been submitted, the European Parliament has sought

to actively encourage the implementation of scientific lead coordination in the health sector.

The main objectives are to:

~ improve the exchange of information and promote interaction and synergies at a larger scale,

~ foster greater economic efficiency in terms of the reduced duplication of efforts.

~ and, finally, ensure quick and simple processes that will foster rapid innovation in such a way that end users benefit as rapidly as possible.

EDCTP is once again exemplary, in this respect. The organisation's core objective is to accelerate the development of new clinical interventions and to improve generally the quality of research in the struggle with poverty related diseases. As such, the programme does indeed illustrate the importance of rapidly achieved tangible results for end users. It is this emphasis on end results – but also on accelerating the pace at which we arrive at the provision of concrete benefits – that should serve as a source of inspiration for us when considering the final structure of H2020.

3) *Conclusions*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

By way of conclusion, I should like to say a few words about the impact of H2020 on the EDCTP. In the first place, budgetary concerns inevitably remain of prime importance, particularly in the context of the present economic difficulties that Europe is experiencing. Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that there will, indeed, be a substantial increase in the budget for research and innovation. It is also to be hoped that the fact that health concerns have been granted the largest share of the budget devoted to societal challenges – and that poverty related diseases are a clearly recognised priority – will translate into continued, sustainable funding for EDCTP II.

Secondly, the new characteristics of H2020 – the fact that the programme covers the whole cycle of innovation, that a real effort has been made to simplify access to funding and that a central

place has been given to scientific lead approaches – will mean that the work of EDCTP II will be significantly facilitated. Simplification is particularly pertinent in a context in which it is necessary to bring together funding from a number of different budgets to deal with challenges that are often costly.

Against this background it only remains for me to express my sincere hope that the crucial work carried out by the EDCTP – work that has real and tangible benefits for humanity as a whole – will continue in the future with even more resources, vigour and purpose.

Thank you very much