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**Public Health Officials Announce First Country to Eliminate Transmission of the
Tropical Disease Onchocerciasis**

**Colombia Announces Elimination, Halt to Treatment;
Milestones Reached in Guatemala and Ecuador**

**Merck & Co., Inc. Renews Commitment to MECTIZAN[®] Donation Program Until
Disease has been Eliminated as a Public Health Problem Globally**

Whitehouse Station, NJ, USA, and Quito, Ecuador, November 15, 2007 – Public health officials gathering at the 17th Inter-American Conference on Onchocerciasis (IACO) in Quito, Ecuador, today announced that transmission of the tropical disease onchocerciasis (also known as river blindness) has been halted in Colombia, marking the first time that the disease has been eliminated as a public health problem on a country-wide basis.

"Colombia's successful effort in halting onchocerciasis transmission is a landmark achievement in public health," said former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, founder of The Carter Center. "This remarkable progress would not be possible without the dedicated health workers and volunteers working at the community level and the invaluable public-private partnership with Merck and the MECTIZAN Donation Program. Because of this vital collaboration, millions of lives in Africa and the Americas will improve and continued progress can be made to wipe this debilitating disease from the hemisphere."

Health officials also announced that onchocerciasis transmission has been halted in certain endemic areas in Ecuador and Guatemala due to the effectiveness of treatment with MECTIZAN[®] (ivermectin). Officials also confirmed that new cases of eye disease caused by onchocerciasis have been eliminated in 9 of the 13 foci in the Americas where it was endemic and all new cases of blindness have been halted in all 13 foci.

Merck also re-affirmed today its pledge to donate as much MECTIZAN as necessary for the elimination of onchocerciasis globally. With this renewed pledge, Merck's donation of MECTIZAN for onchocerciasis is estimated to reach 100 million treatments annually by 2010, making the program the longest-running medicine donation commitment in history.

"Merck will continue to donate MECTIZAN to all who need it for the treatment of onchocerciasis until the disease is eliminated as a public health problem," said Merck Chairman, President and CEO Richard T. Clark. "This is a commitment from which Merck will not waiver."

Onchocerciasis, one of the leading causes of preventable blindness worldwide, is transmitted through the bite of black flies and can cause intense itching, disfiguring dermatitis, eye lesions and, over time, blindness. It is hyper-endemic in 33 countries, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa and isolated areas of Central and South America, and Yemen. In October 1987 Merck announced it would donate MECTIZAN – the only well-tolerated drug known to halt the development of onchocerciasis – to all who need it for as long as necessary until onchocerciasis is eliminated as a public health problem.

Announcements Give Hope to Other Countries

"This is the first time in history that we can confirm that transmission of the disease has been stopped on a country level by means of mass treatment with MECTIZAN, which gives all of us involved in the MECTIZAN partnership hope that continued progress is possible in other parts of the world," said Dr. Bjorn Thylefors, Director of the MECTIZAN Donation Program Secretariat.

Colombia's Ministry of Health made today's announcement based on epidemiological studies conducted by the Colombian onchocerciasis program and the Carter Center's Onchocerciasis Elimination Program of the Americas (OEPA), which showed that onchocerciasis infection levels had been maintained at a level low enough to effectively break the cycle of transmission. The program attributed the results to the strategy of twice-annual mass treatment with MECTIZAN. Based on these findings, experts from the Program Coordinating Committee of OEPA recommended that treatment with MECTIZAN should be suspended. The World Health Organization (WHO) will certify the elimination of onchocerciasis following this announcement by the Colombian Ministry of Health.

Health officials from Guatemala and Ecuador also announced today that treatment with MECTIZAN would stop in 2008 in the Escuintla, Guatemala, and Rio Santiago, Ecuador, regions.

"In addition to the success announced last year in the Santa Rosa region in Guatemala, this means that 74,476 people in 190 communities are now free of the threat of onchocerciasis, and signals the potential for a future free of onchocerciasis in all of the Americas," said Dr. Mauricio Sauerbrey, Director of the OEPA.

Since 1989, more than 7.5 million treatments with MECTIZAN have been approved for distribution in Latin America by community health workers and non-governmental organizations. Treatment programs exist in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Venezuela. In addition to Merck, partners in the Mectizan Donation Program in Latin America include OEPA, The Carter Center, Lions Clubs International Foundation, Christian Blind Mission International, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the WHO / Pan American Health Organization, and local Ministries of Health.

About the MECTIZAN Donation Program

To date, the MECTIZAN Donation Program has approved more than 530 million treatments for onchocerciasis to 33 countries in Africa, Latin America and Yemen and donated more than 1.8 billion MECTIZAN tablets, at a value of US \$2.7 billion. The program currently reaches more than 69 million people each year for the treatment of onchocerciasis; an estimated 40 million treatments of MECTIZAN are also approved each year for lymphatic filariasis through Merck's work with the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis.

To ensure the appropriate infrastructure, distribution and support for the donation initiative, Merck established in 1988 the Mectizan Donation Program, working through a unique, multisectoral partnership, involving the WHO, the World Bank and UNICEF, ministries of health, non-governmental development organizations and local communities. The MECTIZAN Donation Program Secretariat is housed at the Taskforce for Child Survival and Development in Atlanta (USA).

Merck also established the MECTIZAN Expert Committee in 1988, an independent body of seven internationally recognized experts in fields such as public health, parasitology and epidemiology that provides technical oversight of the MECTIZAN Donation Program. For more information, visit www.mectizan.org

Headquartered in Guatemala, OEPA is the technical and coordinating body of a multinational, multi-agency coalition working to end illness and transmission of onchocerciasis in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Venezuela. The Carter Center is the sponsoring agency for OEPA, whose partnership includes the ministries of health of the six affected countries in Latin America, the Pan American Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, academic institutions and independent organizations.

About Merck

Merck & Co., Inc. is a global research-driven pharmaceutical company dedicated to putting patients first. Established in 1891, Merck currently discovers, develops, manufactures and markets vaccines and medicines to address unmet medical needs. The Company devotes extensive efforts to increase access to medicines through far-reaching programs that not only donate Merck medicines but help deliver them to the people who need them. Merck also publishes unbiased health information as a not-for-profit service. For more information, visit www.merck.com.

Forward-looking statement

This press release contains "forward-looking statements" as that term is defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements are based on management's current expectations and involve risks and uncertainties, which may cause results to differ materially from those set forth in the statements. The forward-looking statements may include statements regarding product development, product potential or financial performance. No forward-looking statement can be guaranteed, and actual results may differ materially from those projected. Merck undertakes no obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise. Forward-looking statements in this press release should be evaluated together with the many uncertainties that affect Merck's business, particularly those mentioned in the risk factors and cautionary statements in Item 1A of Merck's Form 10-K for the year ended Dec. 31, 2006, and in its periodic reports on Form 10-Q and Form 8-K, which the Company incorporates by reference.

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