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Toulouse will host the 6th Global Forum on Tuberculosis Vaccines in 2021

Causing 1.5 million deaths worldwide each year, tuberculosis is a global public health emergency. Placed under the high patronage of the President of the Republic and under the patronage of the Ministry for Solidarity and Health, the 6th Global Forum on TB Vaccines will take place in France, at the Centre Pierre Baudis in Toulouse from 20 to 22 April 2021. France's application was submitted by the Institute of Pharmacology and Structural Biology (IPBS – CNRS/Toulouse III – Paul Sabatier University) and the CNRS, with the support of the Federal University of Toulouse Midi-Pyrénées to the organisers of the forum: the Stop TB Partnership Working Group on New TB Vaccines (WGNV - (www.newtbvaccines.org), IAVI, and the Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative (TBVI - www.iavi.org et www.tbvi.eu)

Tuberculosis is a chronic disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Nearly a quarter of the world's population may be infected with tuberculosis. In 2018, 10 million new cases of tuberculosis and 1.5 million deaths were reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) worldwide, ranking it as the leading cause of death due to a single infectious agent. The only vaccine available against tuberculosis, BCG (Bacille Calmette-Guérin), was first administered in 1921 and has proven to be very effective in preventing severe forms of tuberculosis in children, but it provides only moderate protection against transmissible pulmonary forms of the disease in adults. The development of tuberculosis vaccine strategies that are more effective than BCG is a global public health priority. More than a dozen vaccine candidates are currently in clinical trials, and many more are in development.

The Global Forum on TB Vaccines is convened every two – three years by the WGNV in collaboration with IAVI, TBVI, and a partner in the host country. The 6th Global Forum is expected to bring more than 300 stakeholders from over 30 countries and all sectors of tuberculosis vaccine research and development (R&D) to Toulouse. It will allow researchers, clinicians, product developers, policy makers and patient groups to take stock of advances in the field, exchange perspectives on the latest research and best practices and define priority actions aimed at accelerating the development of new vaccines against this disease. Previous forums have been held in Geneva (2001), Tallinn (2010), Cape Town (2013), Shanghai (2015) and New Delhi (2018).

Dr. Nick Drager, CEO of the TBVI and Co-Chair of the Global Forum, at a symposium during the recent Global Fund replenishment conference hosted by France, emphasizes the importance of France's leadership in global health and its excellence in TB vaccine R&D in the quest to find global solutions to the global problem of TB. Moreover, as Mrs Stéphanie Seydoux, French Ambassador for Global Health at the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, points out, "*France's selection for the organisation of this forum is in line with the actions carried out by France in favour of global health, a priority of its development policy, through the presidency of the G7, devoted to the fight against inequality, and by welcoming the 6th replenishment of the resources of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. This year, France also renewed its support to Unitaïd and Gavi*".



Mark Feinberg, M.D., Ph.D., President and CEO of IAVI, said, “IAVI is strongly committed to advancing TB vaccine research, and we are honoured to co-organise the 6th Global Forum on TB Vaccines. The Forum will be an important occasion to share cutting-edge research findings, garner support for advancing promising TB vaccine candidates and for catalyzing the global response to end TB. We are pleased that Toulouse will be hosting the Forum, and are grateful to France for their continued leadership in supporting global health causes”.

“We are thrilled to convene the next Global Forum on TB Vaccines in Toulouse” said David Lewinsohn, Chair of the WGNV. “Toulouse is well-known as a knowledge hub and center for innovation; and France is particularly active in TB vaccine research, with several internationally recognized research teams from the CNRS and the Toulouse III – Paul Sabatier University including some from the IPBS, Institut Pasteur, Institut Pasteur de Lille and the biopharmaceutical company Transgene, a member of Institut Mérieux, among others, contributing to the global effort to develop more effective TB vaccines”.

The selection of the venue for the 6th Global Forum was done through an open and competitive application process. France's application was submitted by the IPBS and the CNRS, with the support of the Federal University of Toulouse Midi-Pyrénées, and was supported by key French research institutes, scientific societies, foundations and private entities based in France. IPBS and the University of Toulouse will serve as the host country partners for the 6th Global Forum, represented on the Scientific Organizing Committee by Dr. Olivier Neyrolles, CNRS researcher and Deputy Director of the IPBS and an internationally recognized expert in the field of tuberculosis.

For more information about the Global Forum on TB Vaccines, please visit <https://tbvaccinesforum.org>

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