



The Secretary-General  
IUPHAR

22 February 2010

Dear Dr Sam Enna

### PROGRESS REPORT ON THE 'PHARMACOLOGY FOR AFRICA' INITIATIVE (PharfA) – FEBRUARY 2010

Since the previous report in February 2009, the 'Pharmacology for Africa' (PharfA – [www.iuphar-africa.org](http://www.iuphar-africa.org)) initiative has been able to set in place first capacity building activities, as well as continue with strategic planning and positioning. These were possible with the support and in close collaboration with the International Union of Basic and Clinical Pharmacology (IUPHAR), including its committee on Integrated and Organ Systems Pharmacology (IOSP).

This report will focus on the following main activities of PharfA in 2009:

- 1<sup>st</sup> African Pharmacology Summit (March 2009, Egypt)
- IOSP School for Africa (Sep 2009, South Africa)
- WCP2014
- PharfA Website & Database

#### 1<sup>st</sup> African Pharmacology Summit (March 2009, Egypt)

The 1<sup>st</sup> African Pharmacology Summit was held on Sunday 15 March 2009 from 11:00 to 17:00. It was hosted and attended by the full executive committee of IUPHAR and African representatives (total ± 25 delegates), chaired by Prof Douglas Oliver and co-chaired by Prof Christiaan Brink (PharfA steering committee). Speakers included Prof Guantai (Kenya), Prof Khayyal (Egypt) and Prof Brink (South Africa)

The Summit took the format of short presentations by African representatives, followed by a brain storming session with discussions, debate, comments, suggestions and strategic decisions taken. IUPHAR indicated that it was still fully supportive of the Pharmacology for Africa initiative and pleased to see the progress. Strategies of how to support and ensure active participation of Africa in WCP2014 were also debated and discussed. It was highlighted that leaders in various countries (such as Prof Guantai in Kenya) have to be identified, as well as pharmacologists with an excellent track record in pharmacology. Other leadership were also identified. Importantly, discussions with Governments will also have to take place, because support from national governmental departments in Africa is in many instances insufficient. Prof Oliver explained that PharfA enjoyed the support of the International Council for Sciences Regional Office in Africa (ICSU ROA) and the National Research Foundation of South Africa (NRF SA), and that particularly ICSU ROA is well positioned to interact with African governments and their policies. Also, workup towards WCP2014 was identified as a vehicle to build capacity and structure in Africa (see below).

## **IOSP School for Africa (Sep 2009, South Africa)**

A full report of the IOSP School for Africa was submitted to Africa (dated 16 October 2009).

The IOSP (*Integrative and Organ Systems Pharmacology*) Committee of IUPHAR, under the chairmanship of Prof David Bylund, received a grant from the International Council of Sciences (ICSU) of €30,000 to hold three workshops on experimental pharmacology in Africa during the 2009/10 calendar year. At a meeting of the IOSP committee, held during the IUPHAR EXCO meeting 2009 (see above) it was decided to hold the first of the three workshops in South Africa.

The first workshop in South Africa was held as a pre-conference satellite meeting (18-22 Sep 2009) of the 5<sup>th</sup> ICPPS congress (23-26 Sep 2009) in Potchefstroom, South Africa, thereby allowing delegates to attend also the congress as added benefit. Accordingly it was hosted by the North-West University in Potchefstroom (who was also the host of the 5<sup>th</sup> ICPPS congress), with Prof. Christiaan Brink as chair of the organising committee. Additional financial support for the workshop in South Africa was obtained from the North-West University (NWU), the National Research Foundation of South Africa (NRF SA) and the South African Society for Basic and Clinical Pharmacology (SASBCP).

The IOSP School focussed on IOSP techniques in central nervous system (CNS) drug discovery, and involved pharmacologists from Kenya and Nigeria. The programme that stretched over a period of four days, included lectures and practicals, and covered topics including animal models for CNS drug testing, ethics, report writing and data handling and research of traditional medicine. In addition, a laboratory animal technician from Kenya, who was included amongst the delegates, also paid additional visits to the Lab Animal Centre in Potchefstroom, to learn more about SOPs, standards for accreditation, and general centre management. Importantly, there was a healthy mix of junior and senior pharmacologists amongst the delegates, so that a "train-the-trainer" approach was applicable for maximal sustainable impact.

Prof. David Bylund (invited speaker, United States of America) provided own travel funding as international expert speaker, while six additional expert speakers were attracted from South Africa. In addition, two laboratory animal technicians of the North-West University offered training in animal handling and experimental techniques. One of the speakers was a bright South African final-year Ph.D. student, thereby creating an opportunity for capacity building. Five delegates from Kenya and three from Nigeria attended the workshop, while postgraduate students of South Africa also attended some of the novel components of the workshop.

Feedback from delegates indicated that the workshop has been extremely valuable to establish new networks and to learn new knowledge and skills. An evaluation form was completed on the last day of the workshop and completed anonymously. The results of the evaluation are provided in the document attached. As stipulated in the final conclusions, the ratings of all criteria were very good and no serious deficiencies were identified. From comments and discussions it was identified as recommendation that it may be important to assist African pharmacologists with the implementation of newly gained knowledge and skills by engaging in discussions with authorities at national and institutional level.

The IOSP School has made a difference, leaving a legacy for the younger generation of pharmacologists. It has contributed to capacity building and laid a foundation for future IOSP Schools in Africa. Its continuation with a 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop in Egypt (13-15 March 2010; cardiovascular pharmacology) and a 3<sup>rd</sup> in Kenya (9-15 May 2010; toxicology) will ensure continued capacity building and that the skills acquired are reproduced.

## WCP2014

The negotiated contract between IUPHAR and the SASBCP to host the WCP2014 in Cape Town, South Africa in 2014 was signed on 15 March 2009, during the IUPHAR EXCO meeting held in Cairo Egypt.

WCP2014 has the potential to unite African Pharmacologists, and in particular poses the opportunity for African pharmacologists not only to attend the meeting, but also to participate. The programme will also have to accommodate particular needs of the African continent. During the 1<sup>st</sup> African Pharmacology Summit (see above) it was proposed that national learned Societies of pharmacology should be approached to assist with financial support for African pharmacologists to attend and participate in WCP2014. Innovative fund raising initiatives will have to be driven by the organising committee, since this will be one of the main challenges. In addition, the structuring and networking of pharmacology in Africa, as co-ordinated by PharfA, will also play a key role in recruiting pharmacologists.

## PharfA Website & Database

The hosting of the website and the maintenance of the correspondence and database of PharfA include the activities that are supported financially by the South African Society for Basic and Clinical Pharmacology (SASBCP).

Since our report in February 2009, the number of pharmacologists registered on the PharfA database stabilised on 138. The KESoBAP and WASP has also not as yet taken up the opportunity to use the PharfA website to host and update their Society websites. Aggressive marketing has not been done, however, particularly since the IOSP School held in South Africa in 2009 occupied most of the human resources currently available. Towards WCP2014 this needs to be addressed and greater involvement of existing Societies and individuals in Africa needs to be actively explored in 2010/2011. Egypt already indicated that they are in a process of invigorating their society and renewed efforts are being made to inspire pharmacologists to actively participate in the African initiative.

Some of the updated and extracted statistics from the PharfA database are now as follows:

Number	Region	Country
31	East Africa	Kenya
1		Uganda
1		Ethiopia
1	North Africa	Tunisia
1		Algeria
14		Egypt
51	Southern Africa	South Africa
1		Swaziland
1		Tanzania
2		Zimbabwe
5	West Africa	Nigeria
2		Ghana

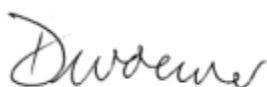
## Prospects 2010

The 3<sup>rd</sup> IOSP School for Africa, hosted by KESoBAP (Kenya), is planned to take place in May 2010. Furthermore networking with African pharmacologists is planned during the WorldPharma2010 congress in Denmark, where an African Pharmacology workshop, as well as an IOSP workshop is also to be held. Furthermore, the PharfA initiative, with its website and database needs to be promoted and marketed, to enhance awareness and participation (see above).

## Summary & Conclusions

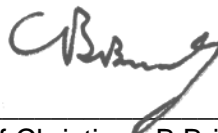
In conclusion, PharfA is still a vibrant initiative, showing progress in accomplishing its aims to promote, organise and mobilise pharmacology research, teaching and life-long learning on the African continent. Its current strength (with the continued support of IUPHAR) and African participation needs to expand.

Yours sincerely



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Prof Douglas W Oliver  
(PharfA steering committee)



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Prof Christiaan B Brink  
(Vice-President & PharfA steering committee)