

CHRIS VIEHBACHER

Chairmand and CEO, Sanofi-Aventis

Jean-Pierre Elkabbach, President, Lagardère News

But I would also like to say to Mr. Viehbacher that it's not a question of accusing you of anything. You explain what you do, etc., what a global health company does in today's world. When it only has to make a profit, how does it carry out research efforts? How much does it invest in research? I'm not exonerating countries – Narendra Taneja was just talking about it, perhaps even in reference to his country; it's easier for me to say it than him – that place taboos on the women's rights issue, on the social justice issue and then there may also be the question of organising Indian society. Are there national responsibilities?

Chris Viehbacher

I think there are good examples in the health field. But I'm not here to defend the pharmaceutical industry. I do, though, want to defend the WHO because I find the WHO has contributed enormously. As I was saying, I was at the WHO on Thursday and there were programmes. Let's take sleeping sickness: in 10 years, we reduced the infection rate by 60% and 15 million people were tested. If you look at HIV, 10 years ago there was a big problem. Everyone was saying, "There's a problem". How did we solve this problem?

It was not through the WHO organisation; it was by establishing a global consensus. There was never a written agreement, but we agreed that "Pharmaceutical companies could take their drugs at cost price to countries with fewer resources and recuperate their research and development investment in industrialised countries".

This means that, first, we're currently using a tiered pricing strategy. Secondly, we've seen the very strong emergence of NGOs – the Gates Foundation, for example. There are funds, such as United, which, in fact, are creating a system which didn't exist before. We can't simply view governance like a supreme body which settles all problems. We can't settle all problems if there is no international consensus.

Narendra Taneja, Energy CEO and Convener, World Oil & Gas Assembly (WOGA)

All I was trying to say is that we need to empower and give more teeth to the WHO. That is Number One. Number Two, there is a fact that pharmaceutical firms, especially corporations like you, Glaxo and several others, are so powerful. When you look at them from Europe, it is one thing. However, you can look at these corporations from the viewpoint of smaller countries such as Bangladesh, or some countries in Africa, or Nepal etc. they find that these corporations are too big to deal with. At the same time, when you look at people who are suffering from various diseases and need cures and all that, the bulk of these people live in that part of the world. This is where the markets are for these corporations.

My question is; how can we create a kind of system, where the global governance becomes more important and more transparent? A system where the ordinary consumers of these medicines and the people in general can feel that there

is something called global governance? Their interests are therefore well-protected and they also have some say in the way these corporations and the world is looking at diseases, in particular.

Chris Viehbacher

To come back to the issues raised by Christophe de Margerie last night, he asked the question, "Who should decide?" I'm going to ask another question: "Who has the legitimacy?" Making decisions about health has a very strong national aspect. There's also a scientific aspect and I can't imagine that even in Europe – the commission's involvement in the health field is limited because it's a national issue. Some high-level authorities are involved.

Using NGOs, creating consensus. In the area of production quality rules, for example, there's something called "good manufacturing practice", the result of an international consensus which was adapted in each country. There are many examples of common sense which should be used. We need to use pragmatic solutions. Concerning treatment, as the speaker was just saying, 95% of drugs are no longer patent protected. There are Indian companies which are extremely efficient today, which export all over Africa. You can't say that Africa is dominated by the large American or European countries. There's clearly a market. But what you're suggesting are more like research programmes. In that case, the effectiveness of the Gates Foundation and International Monetary Fund, for example, is extremely important.

Jean-Pierre Elkabbach, President, Lagardère News

A few comments. Chris Viehbacher can speak English when he talks to Narendra Taneja and French when he speaks to me. You can also speak German and I think that the three languages well reflect the progression of your remarks, goals and responsibilities. You lead a group with a turnover of how many billions of euros?

Chris Viehbacher

29.

Jean-Pierre Elkabbach, President, Lagardère News

29 billion euros. The audience should know what your current research focuses on and what types of countries it targets.

Chris Viehbacher

We do research on all diseases throughout the world. We're very involved in infectology. We're the company most involved in sleeping sickness, dengue fever and malaria. For example, we have a Sanofi Aventis plant right here in Morocco. We can manufacture an anti-malarial drug. Three days of treatment for an adult costs less than 1€ and less than 50 cents for a child.

That means we built a plant which is creating local jobs and resulting in an appropriate price level for the market. Of course, we're also conducting research on an anti-malarial vaccine. In addition, we're the only company which has had a positive result with an AIDS vaccine; we're working on this in partnership with Novartis and with other international partners. We just opened a plant in Mexico for seasonal and pandemic flu vaccines.