

MEDIA RELEASE • COMMUNIQUE AUX MEDIAS • MEDIENMITTEILUNG**Novartis honors scientists for outstanding contributions***Top internal scientific award goes to chemist involved in Glivec® discovery*

Basel, 9 December 2003 – Novartis today honors 10 scientists from the Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research (NIBR) and Pharma Development for their exceptional contributions made in R&D. In a formal ceremony later today, nine of these scientists will be honored with the Leading Scientist Award while the highest distinction – the Novartis Distinguished Scientist Award – will be conferred on Dr. Jürg Zimmermann for his extraordinary contributions to oncology research.

“With these awards we recognize the exceptional contributions made by these scientists working in R&D,” commented Dr. Mark Fishman, Head of the Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research. “Our team of outstanding Novartis scientists is the single most critical element in creating a leading science organization focused on discovering and developing better medicines.”

The Novartis Scientist Awards – granted this year for the sixth time – aim to promote creativity and innovativeness in research and development. The keynote speaker at today’s ceremony will be Professor Dr. Patrick Aebischer, President of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne. His address is entitled: “The need to define new Pharma-academic relationships in the post-biotech era”.

Distinguished Scientist Award

The highest internal scientific distinction at corporate level, the Distinguished Scientist Award carries a prize of CHF 40 000 as well as the right to use the title “Novartis Distinguished Scientist.” This year, the coveted award has been granted to Dr. Jürg Zimmermann, Head of Combinatorial Chemistry, Discovery Technologies, Novartis Institute of BioMedical Research, Basel. Dr. Zimmermann’s outstanding medicinal chemistry contributions in the field of oncology research have been crucial in a number of projects. In particular, he synthesized a promising compound which eventually became Glivec®, the lifesaving treatment for chronic myeloid leukemia, but also the first protein-kinase inhibitor to reach the market.

Leading Scientist Award

This highest scientific distinction conferred on a division level, the Leading Scientist Award carries a prize of CHF 25 000 as well as the right to use the title “Novartis Leading Scientist.” This year, the award is being granted to the following NIBR and Pharma Development scientists: Dr. Jonathan Hall, Dr. René Lattmann, Dr. Jürgen Maibaum, Dr. Paolo Paganetti, Dr. Markus Rudin, and Dr. Mira Susa Spring (NIBR); Dr. Murat Acemoglu, Dr. Paul Gallo, and Dr. Hans-Joachim Wallny (Pharma Development).

In addition, the Leading Scientist Award is being granted to five scientists from the Animal Health and Sandoz units: Dr. Ute Isele (Animal Health) – and Dr. Gerhard Fleissner, Dr. Stefan Horkovics-Kovats, Dr. Heinrich Matous and Dr. Herbert Schleich (Sandoz). Ceremonies honoring the new Leading Scientists from Animal Health and Sandoz will be held within their respective organizations.

Novartis AG (NYSE: NVS) is a world leader in pharmaceuticals and consumer health. In 2002, the Group's businesses achieved sales of USD 20.9 billion and a net income of USD

*In the US: Gleevec® (imatinib mesylate)

4.7 billion. The Group invested approximately USD 2.8 billion in R&D. Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Novartis Group companies employ about 77 200 people and operate in over 140 countries around the world. For further information please consult <http://www.novartis.com>.

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Pictures of the Award Ceremony will be available after the event.