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FOUNDATION

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Initiative supported by: **zoetis**

PRESS RELEASE

First Pledge Made as AFSCAN Calls for Support for Scientific Projects Program

During a press briefing at BSAVA Congress, the African Small Companion Animal Network (AFSCAN) called on the veterinary sector to support a program to promote small animal clinical research relevant to the African continent. It had received its first donation by the end of the briefing as David Simpson, Chair of Trustees at the Petplan Charitable Trust, pledged £5,000 towards a research project, as well as a £2,000 bursary to help African veterinary students undertake placements in a research laboratory.

The new AFSCAN clinical research program aims to provide veterinarians working in African universities with funding to undertake locally relevant investigations related to small animal disease or welfare. It will also foster research links between African veterinary schools and those overseas. Additional funding will be allocated to encourage veterinary students to spend time in research laboratories through the extramural bursary scheme, which the Petplan Charitable Trust has become the first organization to support.

Launched at BSAVA Congress in 2014, AFSCAN is an initiative run by the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) Foundation. It aims to advance standards of veterinary care across Africa through education and through facilitating the creation of a sustainable network of companion animal veterinarians, associations and specialist groups in Sub-Saharan Africa. Five countries are participating in the first phase - Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda. Zoetis is AFSCAN's major supporter but it is also supported by a range of other organizations which, together, form the AFSCAN Consortium.

Professor Michael Day, AFSCAN Board member and Vice-President of the WSAVA Foundation, said: "Our Scientific Projects Program will address an unmet need in the African academic community and help improve our knowledge base of diseases affecting small companion animals in Africa. We hope it will also foster the next generation of veterinary researchers and highlight the importance of investigating diseases in these species."

He added: "We hope that the research funding provided by AFSCAN will be matched by further donations for each selected project and are absolutely delighted that the Petplan Charitable Trust has already stepped forward to offer funding for a research project and an student bursary. We would, of course, be very happy to hear from other potential sponsors."

Education remains a key focus for AFSCAN and, following successful groundwork during 2014, its 'Distance Learning for Colleagues in Africa' project is now working to increase the availability of high quality CE resources across the continent. During 2015, veterinarians from participating countries will start to benefit from the availability of point-of-care, clinical reference resources, Canis (dogs) and Felis (cats) from Consortium member Vetstream and from the educational resources available on the NAVC's online VetFolio platform.

As the accessibility of these resources depends on internet access, UK-based charity Computers 4 Africa is taking unwanted computers, tablets and smartphones, repurposing them and shipping them to Africa for use by AFSCAN-participating veterinary practices. Its work is supported by the BSAVA, which has called on its members to donate redundant equipment.

Commenting, Dr Gabriel Varga, Chairman of the AFSCAN Board and Director of Business Operations for Zoetis North Europe region, said: "It's been a great first year with progress made on many fronts. We're delighted at the enthusiasm shown by African veterinarians to get involved and to embrace the support we have been able to provide."

"We are particularly pleased that several existing veterinary associations in Africa have been strengthened and that a number of new ones are in start-up phase. We've also been happy to support rabies control projects in partnership with World Veterinary Services (WVS) and to start developing new projects for Malawi and Namibia."

" 'Distance Learning for Colleagues in Africa' is also moving forward thanks to the generosity of our Consortium members and of UK vet practices which are donating redundant IT equipment. During 2015, we expect 700 veterinarians in AFSCAN-participating countries to

benefit and, by the end of 2016, we will significantly increase the number of colleagues and countries to have online access to the highest quality clinical content."

He concluded: "African veterinarians really need our help to drive the advances in veterinary care for all species that will improve the health and welfare of both animals and humans. It's great to be offering them support and I'd like to thank Zoetis and all of our Consortium members for their commitment this year."

Notes to editors:

Vet practices wishing to donate redundant IT equipment are asked to:

- contact Computers 4 Africa which will arrange to collect the equipment free of charge for a minimum of ten computers plus other items - www.computers4africa.org.uk
- take it to a donation centre around the UK - www.computers4africa.org.uk/appeals/index.php
- contact Vetstream to deliver it to its offices near Cambridge - www.vetstream.com

About AFSCAN

The AFSCAN project, the first phase of which runs from April 2014 until April 2016, has been developed by the WSAVA Foundation with the backing of the global animal health company Zoetis and a Consortium of other supporters. Its Project Board is chaired by Dr Gabriel Varga, President of the WSAVA Foundation and Director at Zoetis, and includes Professor Michael Day (University of Bristol, UK, and WSAVA Foundation); Dr Theo Kanellos (Zoetis); Dr Remo Lobetti (referral practitioner, South Africa) and Dr Alex Thiermann (OIE).

Other supporters and sponsors of AFSCAN include the OIE, the North American Veterinary Community (NAVVC) and veterinary digital content provider Vetstream; veterinary charity Worldwide Veterinary Services and its Mission Rabies Project; global veterinary equipment supplier KRUUSE; the Morris Animal Foundation; healthcare advertising agency Circa Health; the University of Veterinary Medicine in Kosice, BSAVA and the WSAVA.

About Zoetis

Zoetis (zô-EH-tis) is the leading animal health company, dedicated to supporting its customers and their businesses. Building on more than 60 years of experience in animal health, Zoetis discovers, develops, manufactures and markets veterinary vaccines and medicines, complemented by diagnostic products and genetic tests and supported by a range of services. In 2014, the company generated annual revenue of \$4.8 billion. With approximately 10,000 employees worldwide at the beginning of 2015, Zoetis serves veterinarians, livestock producers and people who raise and care for farm and companion animals with sales of its products in 120 countries. For more information, visit www.zoetis.com.

Issued: 14 April 2015

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