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If you have RealPlayer, you can listen to President Clinton's interview this morning on NPR's The Tavis Smiley Show: <http://www.npr.org/features/feature.php?wflid=1477603>

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Former US president Bill Clinton has brokered a deal with four generic-drug companies to slash the price of AIDS drugs in parts of the developing world.(AFP/Getty Images/Stephen Chernin)



Former President Bill Clinton, center, leaves a press conference in New York, Thursday October 23, 2003. Clinton announced that his foundation has brokered a deal with drug companies that gets AIDS drugs to developing countries at a much lower cost. (AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews)

Clinton Program Would Help Poor Nations Get AIDS Drugs

October 23, 2003

By MARK SCHOOFS

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Former President Bill Clinton plans to announce Thursday a landmark program that attacks two of the toughest obstacles to treating AIDS in the developing world: high drug prices and low-quality health infrastructures.

The Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative has clinched a deal with four generic-drug companies, including one in South Africa, to slash the price of antiretroviral AIDS medicine.

Engineered by longtime Clinton adviser Ira Magaziner, the agreement will cut the price of a commonly used triple-drug regimen by almost a third, to about 38 cents a day per patient from an already cut-rate generic price of about 55 cents. The lowest available price for the same regimen using patented versions of the drugs in developing nations is \$1.54. For a key drug, nevirapine, the price will be cut by almost half.

The agreement also establishes a way of working that is rare in the secretive pharmaceutical industry. The companies involved -- Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd., Cipla Ltd. and Matrix Laboratories Ltd., all of India, and the South African company Aspen Pharmacare Holdings Ltd. -- opened their books and manufacturing processes to a group of Clinton business advisers. Then the advisers and the companies hunted for ways to cut costs, starting with raw-material suppliers in China and ending with the products' packaging. Mr. Clinton's team plans to use this approach to try to lower the price of diagnostic tests, which are still very expensive.

Under the supervision of Mr. Magaziner, the Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative also helped several Caribbean states and three African countries prepare detailed government-approved plans for rolling out the drugs nationwide, instead of just in selected regions. The plans aim to improve the entire health-care system by preparing budgets for hiring and training nurses and doctors, building and upgrading laboratories and clinics, developing patient-information systems, and improving drug warehousing and delivery. Only a handful of other sub-Saharan countries, such as Botswana and Senegal, have created similarly ambitious, government-approved plans.

In the past, South Africa, which has more HIV-infected people than any other country, resisted public pressure to roll out full AIDS treatment in public hospitals and clinics. But the South African government recently named Mr. Clinton's AIDS Initiative as its main

advisory group on HIV treatment, and the Clinton team has helped draft a detailed operational plan for treating AIDS patients that the cabinet is expected to approve shortly.

To pay for the drugs, and for the necessary improvements in the countries' tattered health systems, Mr. Clinton has secured partial funding by personally lobbying leaders of rich nations, such as Ireland and Canada. Ireland has committed EUR50 million (\$58.3 million) over five years, mainly to Mozambique. Canada hasn't yet finalized its donation, but it will be in the "tens of millions," according to a senior government official there. The money will go directly to the governments of the countries that Mr. Clinton's team is assisting. "All I do is procure," Mr. Clinton said in an interview, "I don't receive." Mr. Clinton has also raised more than \$1 million from private sources.

"Usually I just call the prime minister or the president," Mr. Clinton said, "and tell them what we're doing and ask them to have somebody look at it. And I always tell them that even though we're friends they don't have to do this for me -- don't do it unless they think it's a good thing. But I think it's the best thing going in the world in AIDS care."

To develop the programs, Mr. Magaziner has been working with a team of medical experts from such institutions as Harvard and Columbia universities, as well as business executives and consultants. All but one -- a Kenyan who can't afford to work free of charge -- volunteer their time or get support from their organizations.

It's unclear whether enough money can be raised to support millions of patients on lifelong AIDS therapy, and Mr. Clinton concedes his efforts don't always work out. In any case, he isn't expected to raise all of the money. Rwanda, Mozambique and Tanzania have each secured partial funding from other sources, such as the World Bank and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Mr. Clinton vehemently denies any partisan motivation, but his efforts threaten to steal some thunder from President Bush. Months after Mr. Clinton began working on his initiative, Mr. Bush called for \$15 billion over five years to fight AIDS in poor nations. That proposal still hasn't cleared the congressional budget-authorization process.

Getting other governments to prepare and approve ambitious treatment plans was critical to securing the drugs deal, because the plans promised the drug makers large numbers of patients over time -- up to 1.5 million by 2008. Essentially, the Clinton Foundation is becoming a market maker. "This is the first time a group has come forward with predictable volumes," said Yusuf Hamied, chairman of Cipla.

Mr. Magaziner then approached drug companies and asked them to follow what he calls a total quality management approach: open up their cost structures to lock in prices that would give the companies a small profit but make the drug available at the lowest possible cost. He says he first approached the patent-holding pharmaceutical companies "because President Clinton believes in intellectual property." So far, though, none of the Western companies are involved.

Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. says it never received a Clinton proposal, and Merck & Co. says it is in early-stage discussions.

There is a chance that the Western companies will try to block the deal by charging patent infringement. But they have damaged their images when they have tried to do that with AIDS drugs in the past. In South Africa, which has the strongest patent protection in Africa, GlaxoSmithKline PLC and Boehringer Ingelheim GmbH have licensed some of their AIDS drugs to Aspen, one of the Clinton partner companies.

Africa, Caribbean to Get Cheaper AIDS, HIV Drugs

October 23, 2003

By Bernard Orr

Reuters

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Four generic drug companies on Thursday promised to make drugs available to millions of people in African and Caribbean nations suffering with HIV and AIDS at about half the current price.

Former President Bill Clinton, whose foundation has been pressing for cheaper treatments, said the more affordable drugs could help millions get a longer lease on life.

"There are five to six million people in the developing world with AIDS and in urgent need for the drugs," Clinton told reporters at his Harlem office. "Only 200,000 to 300,000 are receiving treatment. The rest are simply being left to die."

Partnering with three firms in India and South Africa's largest generic drug company, Clinton said antiretroviral drugs will be offered at \$140 per person a year, "almost half the current price of inexpensive commonly used drugs."

Human right groups lauded the move.

"For AIDS treatment rates in poor countries to go up, prices have to come down. Today's announcement marks a crucial breakthrough in the AIDS emergency," said Bono, human rights activist and lead singer of rock band U2.

The William J. Clinton Presidential Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative said the plan would get the cheaper drugs to about two million people by 2008. Worldwide, an estimated 42 million people suffer from HIV and AIDS.

Chopping the price of drugs in half is a huge issue for poor African countries, where many people survive on as little as \$300 a year.

Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd., Cipla Ltd. and Matrix Laboratories Ltd., all of India, and South Africa's Aspen Pharmacare Holdings, will manufacture and distribute two of the most commonly used combination drug-therapy cocktails.

Clinton said the foundation sent teams of health and business professionals to work with the companies to identify ways to slash costs and trim profits to a bare minimum.

So far, patients in the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas have received the drugs on a limited basis.

Clinton said Mozambique, Rwanda and Tanzania and South Africa will start receiving the drugs soon.

Clinton Group Gets Discount for AIDS Drugs

October 24, 2003

By LAWRENCE K. ALTMAN

New York Times

Former President Bill Clinton announced yesterday that his foundation had brokered an agreement with four generic drug companies to cut the cost of certain AIDS antiretroviral drugs by about a third, and in one case, by about half, for distribution in poor countries. Under the agreement, combinations of three drugs will be provided in African and Caribbean countries where the Clinton Foundation H.I.V./AIDS Initiative is trying to establish countrywide health care, treatment and prevention programs.

The goal is to provide the drugs to up to two million people by 2008, Mr. Clinton said in making the announcement at a news conference at his offices in Harlem. He said his foundation would work with other organizations like the World Health Organization, President Bush's AIDS initiative and the Global Fund.

The countries in Africa are Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa and Tanzania, which have about one-third of all AIDS cases there. The Caribbean nations are the Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Haiti and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, which includes Antigua and Barbuda; Dominica, Grenada; Saint Kitts and Nevis; St. Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Montserrat, Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands. More than 90 percent of Caribbean AIDS patients live in those places.

Mr. Clinton and AIDS experts on his staff have been working with the government of South Africa. For years, the South African president, Thabo Mbeki, and his top aides have resisted national programs to provide antiretroviral drugs. But in August, the government changed its stand and said it would develop a plan to deliver the drugs this fall.

The companies are Aspen Pharmacare Holdings Ltd. of Johannesburg, and three from India, Cipla Lts. of Mumbai, Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd. of Delhi and Matrix Laboratories of Hyderabad.

The initial agreement covers two commonly used combinations of first-line antiretroviral drugs: stavudine (d4T), lamivudine (3TC) and nevirapine; and AZT, lamivudine and nevirapine. Doctors Without Borders said the best price for one combination — lamivudine, stavudine and nevirapine — had been \$255, but would now be \$132 a patient a year.

Fighting AIDS

Friends of Bill

Oct 23rd 2003

From The Economist print edition

The Clinton Foundation brokers a deal on cheap medicines

AP



A better health plan than his last

AS PRESIDENT, Bill Clinton was famous for wheeling and dealing. More recently, some of that talent has turned to the fight against AIDS. This week, the William J. Clinton Foundation—a philanthropic body established in 1997—announced a new plan to provide access to anti-retroviral drugs for as many as 2m HIV-infected people in 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean by 2008. This is the same goal as was set in George Bush's AIDS plan for 14 countries, announced earlier this year.

The key to the Clinton plan is price. The foundation has brokered an agreement with three Indian companies—Cipla, Ranbaxy and Matrix—and a South African one, Aspen, to offer two key anti-retroviral drug cocktails for as little as 38 cents per person a day, or less than half the price of the most affordable drugs now available in some of the target countries.

The key, says Ira Magaziner, once Mr Clinton's health-care adviser and now chairman of the foundation's AIDS initiative, is to bring sound business analysis to the problem. Industry executives volunteered to pore over these companies' operations for five months, looking for ways to save on production costs while preserving quality. These savings have been passed along as lower final prices, with a small profit margin to keep companies interested.

The big pharmaceutical firms, such as GlaxoSmithKline, which last week cut the price of its own anti-retroviral medicine, Combivir, were invited to take part but declined. The attraction

for a firm like Cipla, says Yusuf Hamied, its chairman, is that the foundation's scheme offers the possibility of high-volume, predictable contracts which encourage firms to increase production for otherwise uncommercial markets.

The next step is for countries to start buying. As part of its efforts to boost the health-care infrastructure of its target countries, the foundation has been helping governments raise money, and expects to see the new system put to the test by Mozambique and Rwanda in the next few weeks. Mr Magaziner says the foundation means to do the same for costly HIV diagnostics, and could extend its reach to other countries. If successful, it might even pave the way for cheaper drugs against other nasty diseases, such as malaria.

Annan welcomes pact on lowering AIDS drug prices in developing countries

October 24, 2003

UN News Centre

24 October - United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan today welcomed an agreement between former President Bill Clinton's foundation and four pharmaceutical companies in developing countries to halve the price of anti-retroviral drugs used to treat HIV/AIDS and he said he hoped other drug manufactures would follow suit.

The price reductions by the four companies "will not only make HIV treatment more affordable to many of those who could previously not afford them, they should also act as a further incentive for Governments, particularly in countries heavily affected by HIV/AIDS, to establish national treatment plans as part of their comprehensive prevention and care emergency strategies," Mr. Annan's spokesman told <http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp?nid=589> a news briefing.

"The Secretary-General hopes the initiative will encourage other pharmaceutical manufacturers to review their pricing policies and evaluate what further price reductions they can make to render these vital medicines more accessible to those who need them most," spokesman Fred Eckhard said.

According to the Clinton Foundation, the four manufacturers in the agreement are Aspen Pharmacare Holdings Ltd. of Johannesburg, South Africa, Cipla Ltd. of Mumbai, India, Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd. of Delhi, India, and Matrix Laboratories of Hyderabad, India. The annual cost of drugs for each infected person is expected to fall to as little as \$140.

Mr. Annan said he trusted that a synergy would be created between the initiative launched by the Clinton Foundation and such efforts as President Bush's Emergency AIDS Plan, the project by the World Health Organization (WHO <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/statements/2003/statement13/en/index.html>) and UNAIDS <http://www.unaids.org/UNAIDS/EN/other/functionality/document.asp?href=htt> to treat 3 million people by 2005 and the work of a public-private partnership called the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.

AIDS Drugs Deal for Poor Nations Announced

October 24, 2003

By Karen Matthews

Associated Press

NEW YORK - Four foreign, generic-drug companies will provide low-cost AIDS ([news - web sites](#)) drugs to several nations in Africa and the Caribbean, former President Clinton ([news - web sites](#)) said Thursday on an agreement brokered by his foundation.

The plan will cut the price of a triple-drug regimen in those countries to about 38 cents a day, Clinton said at a news conference.

"This agreement will allow the delivery of lifesaving medicines to people who desperately need them," Clinton said. "It represents a big breakthrough in our efforts to begin treatment programs in places where, until now, there has been virtually no medicine and therefore no hope."

Under the deal brokered by the William J. Clinton Presidential Foundation, three Indian drug companies and one South African firm will cut the price of their AIDS drugs for distribution in Rwanda, Mozambique, Tanzania, South Africa and several Caribbean nations.

The pharmaceutical companies and Clinton advisers have worked this year on ways to cut costs and reduce drug prices, and the foundation has collaborated with governments of the African and Caribbean nations on feasible ways to fund AIDS treatment.

South Africa is one of the hardest-hit nations by HIV ([news - web sites](#)) and AIDS, with some 4.7 million South Africans, roughly 11 percent of the population, infected with the virus.

The foundation has also helped nations prepare for introducing the drugs into their health systems. The plans are intended to make the drugs more readily available to AIDS patients.

To pay for the drugs, and for improvements in the countries' health systems, Clinton has secured partial funding by lobbying wealthier nations, including Ireland and Canada. Ireland has committed \$58.3 million over five years, mainly to Mozambique.

The four African nations have each secured additional funds from other sources, including the World Bank ([news - web sites](#)) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

4 Foreign Firms to Provide AIDS Drugs to Third World

October 24, 2003

The Seattle Times

NEW YORK — Four foreign generic-drug companies will provide low-cost AIDS drugs to several nations in Africa and the Caribbean, former President Clinton said yesterday, under an agreement brokered by his William J. Clinton Presidential Foundation.

Three Indian drug companies and one South African firm will cut the price of their AIDS drugs for distribution in Rwanda, Mozambique, Tanzania, South Africa and several Caribbean nations.

The plan will cut the price of a triple-drug regimen in those countries to about 38 cents a day, Clinton said at a news conference.

Clinton has secured partial funding by lobbying wealthier nations, including Ireland and Canada. The four African nations have each secured additional funds from other sources, including the World Bank and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Indian firms see higher market share with Clinton deal on AIDS drugs

October 24, 2003

Agence France Press

BOMBAY (AFP) - Indian drug companies eye a larger share in the world market after three firms entered a deal brokered by former US president Bill Clinton ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) to slash the cost of AIDS ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) drugs.

Indian firms Ranbaxy Laboratories, Cipla and Matrix Laboratories along with South Africa's Aspen Pharmacare Holdings are part of the agreement announced Thursday by Clinton.

Patients in nine Caribbean and four African nations where the Clinton Foundation HIV ([news](#) - [web sites](#))/AIDS Initiative operates will be able to obtain a commonly used triple-drug regimen for about 38 cents a day each, down from 1.54 dollars for patented drugs and 55 cents for generic drugs.

"We do expect high selling volumes and the commercial aspects of the deal are very positive," Ranbaxy spokesman Paresh Chaudhary told AFP.

"However, the greatest joy is that it enhances our credibility as a good corporate player," he said Friday.

Ranbaxy's stock closed up 14.2 rupees to close at 962.3 Friday on the Bombay Stock Exchange. Cipla rose 2.6 rupees to 1,137.2.

Ranbaxy, which is India's largest pharmaceutical firm, sold 2.2 million dollars worth of AIDS anti-retroviral drugs in the 2002-2003 fiscal year, Chaudhary said.

The company holds a 15 percent share in the anti-retroviral drug segment in India, which has 3.97 million HIV-positive people, more than any country except South Africa.

"This is expected to rise to 20 percent this financial year. The fresh deal will mean a further growth in this segment," Chaudhary said.

The Clinton Foundation estimates that between five and six million people living with AIDS worldwide currently need treatment to save their lives, and with more than 40 million infected with HIV that number is expected to rise substantially over the next few years.

Only about 300,000 people in the developing world are receiving anti-retroviral drugs -- more than one third of them in Brazil. Of the four million AIDS sufferers in sub-Saharan Africa, only 50,000 are receiving required treatment.

Indian Cos to supply AIDS drugs

October 24, 2003

By CHIDANAND RAJGHATTA

The Times of India

WASHINGTON: Three Indian drug companies have been named to supply AIDS medication to the Clinton Foundation for use in African and Caribbean countries under an agreement brokered by the former president, it was announced on Thursday.

Under the deal, Mumbai's Cipla Ltd., Delhi's Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd., and Hyderabad's Matrix Laboratories Ltd., will supply AIDS antiretroviral (ATV) drugs at about half the cost in India and at fraction of what the same cocktail would cost in the West.

For example, one of the commonly used triple drug therapy combination will be available for just 36-to-38 cents per person per day or for less than \$140 per person per year, while it costs nearly a dollar a day or about \$ 365 a year even in developing countries such as India. The same combination used to cost upward of \$ 10,000 per year in the United States although the prices have now been falling.

"I applaud these manufacturers for doing the right thing," Clinton said while announcing the pricing deal at his Harlem office in New York after several months of talks. "It represents a big breakthrough in our efforts to begin treatment programs in places where, until now, there has been virtually no medicine, and therefore no hope."

The full value of the agreement, which also includes the South African drug company Aspen Pharmacare Holdings Ltd., as the fourth partner, was not revealed. But the Foundation said it hoped to supply some 2 million people with the drug by 2008.

Most of the Foundation's work is centred round the African countries of South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania and Rwanda, which together have about 33 per cent of all people living with AIDS in Africa, and nine Caribbean nations.

At least one of the countries, South Africa, was initial resistant to the use of ATV drugs with opposition coming from President Thabo Mbeki himself, on grounds that the AIDS threat was overblown. But he has since changed his mind as the dreaded infection is beginning to decimate the country's working population.

According to an account in the South African newspaper Star, the Mbeki government also had got a sense of the pharma bonanza during the President's recent visit to India.

The South African health minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang fell ill during the trip and was prescribed antibiotics by the doctor. She was astounded to discover that the drugs cost her the equivalent of 20 rand - far cheaper than anywhere else in the world.

But that's not how the western drug companies, who accuse Indian firms of copying their drugs, see it. Many of them have been campaigning quietly against generic drug firms, including raising the bogey of quality.

The Indian ARVs have however been assessed to meet international quality standards by the World Health Organization and the Medicines Control Council of South Africa.

Aspen nets major Aids drugs contract

October 24, 2003

Business Day (South Africa)

JSE Securities Exchange listed pharmaceutical company Aspen Pharmacare (APN) has entered into an agreement with the US-based Clinton Foundation for the manufacture of antiretroviral (ARV) medicines.

Former US President Bill Clinton announced in New York that his Foundation has reached an agreement with Aspen and selected other leading multinational generic drug manufacturers on a major reduction in the price of HIV/Aids medicine.

As a result, it will be easier to make life-saving drugs widely available to people with HIV/Aids in the developing world, Aspen said in a statement on Friday.

ARVs supplied by these companies have been certified to be of high quality by the World Health Organisation and the Medicines Control Council of South Africa (MCC).

"This agreement will allow the delivery of life-saving medicines to people who desperately need them," Clinton said.

"It represents a big breakthrough in our efforts to begin treatment programmes in places where, until now, there has been virtually no medicine, and therefore no hope."

Stephen Saad, Aspen Group Chief Executive said: "As Africa's largest generics manufacturer, this agreement further endorses the Group's quality manufacturing, scientific and development capabilities, placing Aspen in a league with the leading international generic pharmaceutical manufacturers."

Aspen has continually stated its commitment to contributing toward the fight against the HIV/Aids pandemic, and this was recently evidenced by the launch of Aspen Stavudine - the first generic ARV developed and manufactured in Africa, Saad said.

"This initial ARV demonstrates Aspen's commitment to healthcare in southern African and underlines the scientific and manufacturing capabilities that exist within the country at Aspen's Port Elizabeth based research and production facilities."

He added that Aspen is presently in the process of enhancing its manufacturing facilities with the addition of a new multi-million rand oral solid dosage manufacturing facility to service both domestic and offshore markets.

The agreement covers ARVs delivered to people in Africa and the Caribbean where the Clinton Foundation is working with governments and organisations to set up country-wide integrated care, treatment and prevention programs.

Under the Clinton Foundation agreement, the price of one of the commonly used triple

drug therapy combinations will be available for less than US\$140 per person per year - or 36-38 cents per person per day - a reduction of one-third to one-half in the current price of drugs in the developing world, said Clinton.

Saad said Aspen's ARV offering should be bolstered shortly by the addition of Didanosine, Lamivudine, Zidovudine, the Lamivudine/Zidovudine combination and Nevirapine which have been submitted to the MCC for registration.

These additional licenses were made available to Aspen through arrangements with Bristol-Myers Squibb, GlaxoSmithKline and Boehringer Ingelheim.

As a result of the voluntary licenses secured, Aspen infringes no patent regulations.

The Clinton Foundation has been working with the companies on this agreement over the course of the past nine months, focusing on ways to reduce their costs and scale up production of the so-called "triple drug cocktails," which can substantially extend the lives of people living with Aids and help prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

Aspen to make AIDS drugs for Clinton foundation

October 23, 2003

Reuters

JOHANNESBURG, Oct 23 (Reuters) - South Africa's Aspen Pharmacare (APNJ.J: [Quote](#), [Profile](#), [Research](#)) said on Thursday it had agreed with former U.S. president Bill Clinton's foundation to manufacture affordable AIDS drugs for developing countries.

The agreement between Aspen, Africa's largest generics manufacturer, and the William J. Clinton Foundation, will offer one of the commonly used triple-therapy drug cocktails at less than a \$140 per person per year, which they said was equivalent to a price reduction of between one-third and one-half.

"This agreement will allow the delivery of life-saving medicines to people who desperately need them," said Clinton in a statement.

"It represents a big breakthrough in our efforts to begin treatment programs in places where, until now, there has been virtually no medicine, and therefore no hope."

Clinton crafts low-cost foreign AIDS-drug pacts

October 24, 2003

By Liz Trotta

The Washington Times

NEW YORK — Former President Bill Clinton announced yesterday that he has persuaded four foreign generic-drug companies to provide low-cost drugs to AIDS patients in Africa and the Caribbean.

In an ambitious program, believed to be the first of its kind, the Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative also plans to overhaul the health care systems of the countries involved, including preparation of budgets, hiring staff and disseminating the drugs.

"It means we will be able to deliver lifesaving medicines to people who desperately need them," Mr. Clinton said at a news conference in his Harlem office.

The drug companies — Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd., Cipla Ltd. and Matrix Laboratories Ltd. of India and Aspen Pharmacare Holdings Ltd. of South Africa — will cut their prices for AIDS drugs to be distributed in Rwanda, Mozambique, Tanzania, South Africa and several Caribbean nations.

The deal slashes the price of a popular triple-drug regimen by a third, to about 38 cents a day per patient, and will be funded partially by Canada and Ireland. Canada is expected to make a significant donation and Ireland has already committed \$58.3 million over five years, mainly to Mozambique.

Mr. Clinton said that fewer than 50,000 people will receive the drugs in the countries his foundation is working in, but he expects that figure to rise to 2 million in the next five years. He emphasized that none of the money would go to him.

"This is a straight-up business deal that has been worked over very carefully," he said. Mr. Clinton added that he personally did much of the lobbying himself with the help of long-time Clinton aide Ira Magaziner.

He told the Wall Street Journal, "Usually, I just call the prime minister or the president and tell them what we're doing and ask them to have somebody look at it. And I always tell them that even though we're friends, they don't have to do this for me, don't do it unless they think it's a good thing."

The former president insisted that he was not trying to upstage President Bush's \$15 billion AIDS program, which has yet to obtain congressional budget authorization. He said he would welcome money from the Bush program.

The Arkansas Democrat said last June that he did not do enough in his second

presidential term to stem the spread of AIDS, even though his administration distributed a billion condoms to countries most affected by AIDS.

Mr. Clinton said there are 42 million people in the world infected with the AIDS virus, 6 million of whom need immediate medical care. In the Caribbean, the foundation is working with nine countries and three territories where, according to the Clinton staff, more than 90 percent of people afflicted with AIDS live.

Bill Clinton announces deal to slash costs of AIDS drugs

October 24, 2003

Agence France Press

NEW YORK (AFP) - Former US president Bill Clinton ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) announced a deal with four generic-drug companies to slash the price of AIDS ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) drugs in parts of the developing world.

The agreement with three Indian pharmaceutical firms and a South African company will cut the price of a commonly used triple-drug regimen by almost a third, to about 38 cents a day per patient.

The same regime using patented drugs currently costs around 1.54 dollars, and 55 cents for generic drugs.

The deal was brokered by the Clinton Foundation HIV ([news](#) - [web sites](#))/AIDS Initiative which worked extensively with the four firms -- Ranbaxy Laboratories, Cipla and Matrix Laboratories of India, and South Africa's Aspen Pharmacare Holdings -- to find ways of bringing costs down.

"This agreement will allow the delivery of life-saving medicines to people who desperately need them," Clinton said.

"It represents a big breakthrough in our efforts to begin treatment programs in places where, until now, there has been virtually no medicine, and therefore no hope," he told reporters.

The agreement covers the delivery of the cheaper drugs to those countries where the Clinton Foundation is working with governments and organisations to set up national care, treatment and prevention programmes.

They include nine countries in the Caribbean and the African nations of Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa and Tanzania.

Funding for the AIDS programmes in those countries has been secured, in part, by lobbying developed nations, some of which, like Ireland and Canada, have already pledged tens of millions of dollars.

"The crisis of AIDS in the developing world requires an emergency response from the global community," Clinton said. "I applaud these manufacturers for doing the right thing."

The foundation estimates that between five and six million people living with AIDS worldwide currently need treatment to save their lives, and with more than 40 million infected with HIV that number is expected to rise substantially over the next few years.

Only about 300,000 people in the developing world are receiving anti-retroviral drugs -- more than one third of them in Brazil. Of the four million AIDS sufferers in sub-Saharan Africa, only 50,000 are receiving required treatment.

One early reaction to Clinton's announcement came from Irish rock superstar Bono, a high-profile AIDS activist in his own right.

"This marks a crucial breakthrough in the AIDS emergency, showing that we can, and must, wage a successful war against this preventative and treatable disease" Bono said in a statement.

"Now what we need is money on a scale that matches the scale of the crisis. We are waiting to see what the US Congress and other rich countries will do to provide the cash," he added.

AIDS Plan Would Cut Drug Costs For Poor: WHO Would Provide 3-in-1 Pill to Nations

By Shankar Vedantam

Saturday, October 25, 2003; Page A01

Washington Post

GENEVA, Oct. 24 -- The World Health Organization will disclose next week the first details of a global AIDS strategy to bring low-cost drugs to 3 million people in poor countries, a plan that top officials said will eventually include endorsement of pills that combine three HIV drugs in a single tablet.

The endorsement of the three-in-one pills is expected to be controversial because they could violate a variety of patents. Only about 300,000 people are receiving AIDS medicine in the regions targeted by WHO.

The strategy is also expected to call for treating patients at the first sign of symptoms, rather than waiting for tests to confirm infection by HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, and to allow nurses and community organizations to dispense the medicines. As a first step, WHO will issue a list next week of the "first line" medicines to be used in poor countries.

One "fixed-dose" combination already is being sold by a generic-drug manufacturer in India, and several others are in the pipeline. Health experts here said the single-pill combinations would offer huge benefits by providing medication that would work for about 80 percent of patients in an easy-to-use and low-cost form.

If the pills proved popular and effective, the Bush administration could face a politically difficult choice between high-priced patented drugs and low-cost combination generics as it implements its own five-year program to fight AIDS in Africa and elsewhere.

Unlike generic AIDS medicines that copy a single drug's formula, each of the new combination pills could infringe on several patents in one stroke, taking the conflict between providing lifesaving medicines and protecting intellectual property rights into uncharted waters.

"If we have this regimen in fixed-dose combinations, it will be the best," Paulo Teixeira, director of WHO's HIV/AIDS Department, said in an interview. "I hope very soon we will have more and more fixed-dose combinations."

The combination pills are expected to be part of a broad strategy that the health agency will soon outline to reach its "3 by 5" target. Teixeira and others said the effort could press ahead without the all-in-one pills, but such medicines would be the best way to rapidly increase the number of people receiving lifesaving therapies.

Of the 3 million patients targeted worldwide, nearly 2 million are in Africa; the rest are scattered across Asia and Latin America.

Activist groups have championed the "fixed-dose" approach. The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Associations opposes the approach, however, contending that combination pills have not been rigorously tested and would make it easier for counterfeit drugs to enter the market.

The pending WHO announcement will mark the second important development in days in the effort to increase access to AIDS medicines. On Thursday, the William J. Clinton Presidential Foundation, founded by former president Bill Clinton, announced agreements with three generic-drug manufacturers in India and one in South Africa to dramatically lower the price of AIDS drugs. Ira Magaziner, chairman of the foundation's HIV/AIDS Initiative, said three fixed-dose combination pills were covered by the agreement, at an annual cost of \$132 to \$240 per patient.

Meeting WHO's goal of providing treatment to an additional 2.7 million AIDS patients by the end of 2005 means 100,000 people would need to be started on medication every month. Several officials here privately conceded that the target is unrealistic, but all said it will spur a long-overdue international effort. More than 5 million people in poor countries need AIDS medication but are not receiving it, health specialists estimate.

Teixeira said the ultimate goal is to radically expand access to AIDS treatment in poor countries. "We will say, you don't need to get care only from doctors; let's train nurses, community organizations and families," he said. "We're changing the paradigm of AIDS treatment." Teixeira is credited for having rapidly increased access to HIV treatment in his native Brazil. Half of all patients in poor countries now being treated for AIDS are Brazilians.

The fixed-dose approach has several advantages, as well as a few drawbacks. Peter Graaff, an AIDS medicine policy expert at WHO, said the biggest advantage may be in getting people to take the medicine on the right schedule. Taking combinations of separate pills can be difficult, and supply problems with any one medicine can upset the entire regimen, he said. That could make it more likely that patients would develop and pass along resistant strains of the virus. However, some patients on fixed-dose medicines may experience side effects caused by just one of the medicines in the combination, Graaff said, and packaging the drugs in a combination tablet would limit the flexibility to switch patients to a different drug combination.

One combination medicine, called Triomune, developed by the Indian pharmaceutical company Cipla, is being used in Africa. It combines the medicines 3TC (lamivudine), d4T (stavudine) and nevirapine. India is not part of the global system on intellectual property rights, but is expected to sign on by 2005. Under recently negotiated exceptions to the patent system, poor countries can allow local manufacturers to duplicate lifesaving generic medicines, and to export them after completing arrangements that carve out limited exceptions to patents.

Negotiating those "compulsory licensing" arrangements is expected to be much more complicated for the fixed-drug combinations. Thomas Kanyok, who works in a WHO program that develops medicines for poor countries, said the threat of compulsory licensing could prompt multinational pharmaceutical companies to develop their own fixed-dose combination medicines or license other manufacturers to make them.

The other large variable in the equation is the U.S. government, which has pledged \$15 billion to fight AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean over five years.

"Will that be used to buy generics, or will there be stipulations to buy from a U.S. manufacturer?" Kanyok asked.

Harvey Bale, director general of the international pharmaceutical federation, said that generic fixed-dose combination drugs have not been thoroughly tested and that WHO's endorsement would encourage counterfeit drugs.

"We're going to start treating 3 million by 2005," he said. "The question is, are we going to help 3 million by 2005?" But Ellen 't Hoen, spokeswoman for the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines of the nonprofit group Doctors Without Borders, said combination pills are essential to fight AIDS in poor countries. "WHO would have to say that this is the way to go," she said. "That implicitly says that patents shouldn't stand in the way."