

For Immediate Release
24 October 1995

HKUST AND BAYER JOIN HANDS TO COMBAT MALARIA

The recent agreement between the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and Bayer A.G., the giant German chemical company, has signified a positive step forward for the treatment of highly resistant malaria.

Malaria strikes more than 280 million people and claims more than two million lives annually. According to the World Health Organisation, over half of the world's population is at risk.

Dr Richard K. Haynes in HKUST's Department of Chemistry is a recognised authority on the development of anti-malarial drugs from the Chinese medicinal herb *qinghao*. He finds Bayer's enthusiasm in its pharmaceutical fight against malaria especially encouraging.

"It is exciting to have one of the biggest chemical companies in the world participate in our research," says Dr Haynes. "The collaboration offers hope for the development of new frontline drugs for the treatment of malaria."

Under the one-year agreement, a post-doctoral researcher, Dr Arndt Voerste from Bayer A.G., arrived at HKUST in September to begin work in the group of Dr Richard Haynes.

The initial focus is on preparing new derivatives of artemisinin, the drug obtained from *qinghao* by chemically modifying its structure. The team will later prepare synthetic analogues of the drug by using methods and reactions developed by Dr Haynes and collaborators, which are currently the subject of patent applications.

The collaborative agreement is another accomplishment of HKUST RandD Corporation Ltd., which plays an important role in bringing the two worlds of academia and the pharmaceutical industry together through negotiations. This is also a significant step for HKUST in its bid to further ties with European-based organisations in the process of technology transfer.

Note to Editors:

Direct enquiries to the Office of Public Affairs at 2358 6320 or pager 1163388 call 2652.