Roche and the World Health Organization partner to improve access to Actemra®/RoActemra® (tocilizumab) for COVID-19 in low- and middle-income countries

- Roche is providing a significant portion of Actemra/RoActemra intravenous (IV) supply at cost to WHO and ACT-A partners to distribute in line with public health needs

Basel, 24 March 2022

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Roche has been working with the World Health Organization (WHO) and partners of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) Initiative, amongst others, to improve availability and affordability of its COVID-19 medicines for people around the world.

As part of a comprehensive access approach to support all countries in combating the pandemic, and building on an initial agreement signed by the partners in Autumn last year, Roche has committed up to 250,000 doses of Actemra®/RoActemra® (IV) at cost for WHO and ACT-A partners to distribute in 2022 to low- and middle-income countries in line with public health needs. As a first step, WHO and partners are providing Actemra/RoActemra to Ukraine and neighbouring countries affected by the current crisis.

“We’ve been working closely with governments, WHO and other global and local partners over the last two years to ensure that our COVID-19 tests and medicines reach people around the world in a fair and affordable way,” said Padraic Ward, International Head of Roche Pharmaceuticals. “This provision of Actemra/RoActemra builds on the significant portion of our COVID-19 medicines supply that we’ve delivered to upper-middle- and lower-middle-income countries since the beginning of the pandemic. Supporting people in these geographies with care options continues to be a crucial part of our COVID-19 response.”

Roche has put several other mechanisms in place to improve global access to its COVID-19 medicines and tests. These include:

- Implementing an international differential pricing strategy in late 2021, specifically designed to address needs during this pandemic and improve affordability of our COVID-19 medicines around the world.¹

- Working with WHO to include Actemra/RoActemra in its list of prequalified medicines, allowing faster and easier procurement by governments and non-governmental organisations for distribution in low- and middle-income countries.²

- Not asserting any patents against the use of Actemra/RoActemra in COVID-19 in low- and middle-income countries since early 2021 (alongside Chugai), to provide legal
certainty for biologic manufacturers who are ready and able to produce the medicine during the current pandemic.¹

- Working with WHO and ACT-A partners to donate Ronapreve™ (casirivimab and imdevimab, known as REGEN-COV® in the US), together with Regeneron, to support low- and middle-income countries in the event of future variants for which Ronapreve might have utility.
- Overcoming industry-wide supply challenges as the pandemic has evolved, including dedicating our largest manufacturing facilities exclusively to producing COVID-19 medicines and working with partners to transfer technologies to maximise production.
- Expanding Roche’s Global Access Programme for low- and middle-income countries to include rapid and accurate diagnostics that can be widely used in laboratories across the world.⁷

Roche and its partners will keep working tirelessly so that COVID-19 care options reach as many people in need as possible.

About Roche
Founded in 1896 in Basel, Switzerland, as one of the first industrial manufacturers of branded medicines, Roche has grown into the world’s largest biotechnology company and the global leader in in-vitro diagnostics. The company pursues scientific excellence to discover and develop medicines and diagnostics for improving and saving the lives of people around the world. We are a pioneer in personalised healthcare and want to further transform how healthcare is delivered to have an even greater impact. To provide the best care for each person we partner with many stakeholders and combine our strengths in Diagnostics and Pharma with data insights from the clinical practice.

In recognising our endeavor to pursue a long-term perspective in all we do, Roche has been named one of the most sustainable companies in the pharmaceuticals industry by the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices for the thirteenth consecutive year. This distinction also reflects our efforts to improve access to healthcare together with local partners in every country we work.

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References
[1] Roche data on file

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