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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 1, 2010

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PRESS RELEASE

BOLIVIA'S OFFICIAL MEDICINE CONTROL LABORATORY ATTAINS WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION PREQUALIFICATION

--Achievement will improve patient access to quality-assured priority medicines--

WASHINGTON, DC, USA – Amazon Malaria Initiative (AMI) announced today that Bolivia's Official Medicine Control Laboratory, or *Laboratorio de Control de Calidad de Medicamentos y Toxicología* (CONCAMYT), has achieved World Health Organization (WHO) prequalification to test priority medicines relevant to public health programs and ensure the medicines meet appropriate quality standards. The Prequalification Programme, a United Nations (UN) initiative managed by WHO, aims to make quality priority medicines available to benefit those in need.

The important accreditation, achieved with support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded AMI and South America Infectious Diseases Initiative (SAIDI), ensures that the CONCAMYT's technical operations and administrative systems are functioning at the highest international quality standards. This recognition certifies that the CONCAMYT provides accurate, valid and trustworthy information to the Bolivian Ministry of Health, industry and public in general, guaranteeing the distribution of good quality pharmaceutical products to the population.

"We are impressed by CONCAMYT on this accomplishment and proud that our contribution made it possible," said Patrick Lukulay, director of the Promoting the Quality of Medicines (PQM) Program, implemented by the U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP) and funded by USAID. "This achievement will improve public health nationally as well regionally by giving the population access to safe and potent medicines."

The PQM Program serves as a primary mechanism to help assure the quality, safety and efficacy of medicines that are essential to USAID's priority health programs. In Bolivia, PQM supports quality assurance and quality control systems in general, and the CONCAMYT in particular, through AMI and SAIDI.

"The prequalification of CONCAMYT by WHO shows that the agency, along with Bolivia's healthcare system, is moving to the leading positions in the region in terms of essential medicines quality and safety," said Dr. Jaime Chang, project management specialist from the Health Office of USAID-Peru and coordinator for AMI and SAIDI. "This is a very encouraging

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trend that shows that international cooperation and technical assistance accelerate national as well as regional healthcare self-sufficiency.”

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) has voiced its support for the prequalification programs. “This will facilitate the monitoring of pharmaceutical products quality in Latin America in accordance with the Global Fund control requirements,” says Lelio Marmora, Regional Team Chief, Latin America and Caribbean of the Global Fund in a letter sent to the the GFATM project principal recipients.

AMI is a regional initiative in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru and Suriname, working to improve malaria control at the sub-regional level, which contributes to decreasing morbidity and mortality at the national level. SAIDI is working in Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru, and is active at the national and community levels in each country to contain the spread of antimicrobial resistance. Partners include USP, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Management Sciences for Health (MSH), Links Media and Research Triangle Institute (RTI).

For more information on USAID, please visit www.usaid.gov.

Other participating organizations can be found at www.uspdqi.org, www.paho.org, www.msh.org, www.cdc.gov, <http://www.tufts.edu/med/apua> and <http://www.rti.org>.

Links Media (www.linksmedia.net) provides communications support to AMI and SAIDI.

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