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PRESS RELEASE

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THE PHARMACEUTICAL FIRM ABBOTT MUST CHANGE ITS POLICY TOWARDS PEOPLE AFFECTED BY HIV/ AIDS

Last December, in accordance with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreement on the aspects of the intellectual property rights related to trade and the Doha statement to the public health, Thailand issued compulsory licences on several drugs.

With payment of royalties to the patent owner (in fact, drugs makers), that country can sell more cheaply a licensed drug and then allows a huge amount of ill-people to have access to treatment. As recalled by the fourth article of the Declaration the agreement on "the aspects of the intellectual property rights (ADPIC) should work in a way where WTO members could protect the public health and particularly promote the access to drugs for all.

Although the Thailand government's decision respects the ADPIC agreement, Abbott company, involved for one of the drugs, decided in consequence to no longer register new medicines in this country, like Kaletra tablet. This drug is indispensable to the sick whose previous treatments had failed. Its shape in tablet is well adapted to tropical countries because you do not need to keep it refrigerated.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) supported without any doubt the use of the agreement flexibility on ADPIC by Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs)

Meanwhile the French authorities backed the Thailand's decision; Abbott maintained its view.

To cope with this situation, a group of sick Thai has launched an international solidarity call to Aids Non-Government-Organisation (NGO) to put pressure on the Abbot firm. Act up-Paris organisation protested the 26th of April in "freezing" the access of the firm Webster for few hours. Following this "cyber-demonstration", Abbott sued Act-up.

The discrepancy between someone who risks his life because of non-treatment and a Webster attack has to be emphasised.

In that case, The Conseil National du sida:

- Call all the protagonists/actors who fight against Aids to add their voice with millions people to put into practice the agreement flexibility on ADPIC which will allow the access to drugs for all.
- Demand from all pharmaceutical companies and especially Abbott firm in Thailand to agree with the compulsory licenses granting in order to help the sick to afford these medicines.
- Call the Abbott company to go back on its decision to sue an organisation which fight against Aids