



## BEXIMCO PHARMACEUTICALS LTD.

### News Release

16 September 2006

#### **Beximco Pharma joins the world league of CFC free Inhaler (MDIs) manufacturers**

Beximco Pharmaceuticals Limited, the leading manufacturer of pressurized Metered Dose Inhalers (MDIs) in Bangladesh has announced the introduction of country's first CFC (Chlorofluorocarbon) free MDIs, used in asthma and COPD – Azmasol<sup>®</sup> HFA (Salbutamol) and Decomit<sup>®</sup> HFA (Beclomethasone). This achievement was announced yesterday in an International Symposium on Metered Dose Inhalers at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre, in front of 1,000 physicians and chest specialists of the country. The world renowned authorities on HFA (Hydrofluoroalkane) MDIs Dr. Richard Spiers and Dr. Tol Purewal presented the key note speeches on the clinical benefits of CFC free HFA inhalers. Both Dr. Spiers and Dr. Purewal played the leading role in the development and launching of world's first CFC-free salbutamol and beclomethasone MDI products.

The currently manufactured MDIs in Bangladesh contain CFC as a propellant, which is safe for human use but is considered as a major culprit of ozone depletion. Ozone depletion poses a serious environmental threat, as it reduces the amount of ozone in the ozone layer that acts as a shield to protect the earth against the sun's harmful rays. In 1987, 183 countries including Bangladesh agreed to a treaty called "Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete ozone layer" and this treaty urges to implement gradual phase out of CFC usage.

This global phase out of CFC production and formidable challenge to develop alternative ozone friendly inhalers have placed the country like Bangladesh in a difficult situation to continue the supply of essential MDI to millions of asthma and COPD patients. Many major pharmaceutical companies in the world are undertaking extensive research and development works to produce CFC free MDIs, by replacing CFC propellant with Ozone-benign HFA propellant. Unlike CFCs, HFAs do not contain chlorine and therefore do not harm the ozone layer. But, manufacturing HFA MDIs is a big challenge as it involves very high level of expertise and sophisticated technology and for companies in developing and least developed countries it seems to be a technology far beyond reach.

The CEO of Beximco Pharma Mr. Nazmul Hassan while talking about this launching commented, "There are over 7 million people in Bangladesh suffering from asthma and COPD. As a signatory of Montreal Protocol, Bangladesh is also phasing out the import of CFC sharply and from January 1, 2010 there will be no import allocation of CFC for Bangladesh. While many leading global pharmaceutical companies are struggling to develop CFC-free MDIs, we have successfully developed HFA based inhalers for the first time in Bangladesh. The philosophy which has driven us to take this initiative and make huge investment in this technology is simple – we cannot let our patients lose their breath to asthma. We cannot let our nation become import dependent for CFC free alternative MDIs, incurring huge loss of foreign currency. The nation demanded us to come up with bigger ideas to manufacture CFC free inhalers while protecting our mother planet. We knew this was a major challenge and we have successfully overcome this challenge with people's trust on us".

Mr. Rabbur Reza, Director Marketing and Mr. Zakaria S Chowdhury, Director Sales stressed that Beximco Pharma works to live up to doctors' expectation and sometimes more beyond expectation – "we are committed to provide highest technology and world-class life saving drugs at affordable prices to the people of Bangladesh."

Mr. Nazmul Hassan also added, "we have been exporting our MDI brands to various markets including Singapore, Kenya and Pakistan, however, have not been able to enter the most attractive US and EU markets due to our CFC based formulation. Our new HFA based formulations will enable us to enter the highly regulated markets of the US and EU which represents the major share of the world MDI market worth US\$ 10 billion, according to a 2005 estimate."

Beximco Pharma has more than nine years of excellence in manufacturing MDI products, including salbutamol, beclomethasone, salmeterol, salmeterol plus fluticasone, budesonide ipratropium, tiotropium, levosalbutamol, and ciclesonide inhalers and has emerged as one of the leading pharmaceutical companies in asthma & COPD market in South Asia region. There are only about fourteen companies in the whole world (including Beximco Pharmaceuticals) who have successfully marketed this technology driven, life saving CFC-free HFA MDIs.

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