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Strengthening the Role of Genomics and Global Health

Status	Current
Competition	III
Sector	GE ³ LS – Genomics and Ethical, Environmental, Economic, Legal and Social Issues
Genome Centre	Ontario Genomics Institute
Project Leaders	Peter Singer & Abdallah Daar

Project Description

There is a tremendous need for new approaches to deal with long-standing global health inequities. While life expectancies in industrialized countries are currently about 80 years and rising, in a number of developing countries, they are at 40 years and falling. Canada has a special opportunity to help the world use advances in genomics-based knowledge to deal with some of its most pressing problems: disease, poverty, hunger and environmental degradation. In his February 2004 reply to the Speech from the Throne, Prime Minister Paul Martin announced that Canada would devote no less than five percent of R&D spending to challenges of developing countries in the areas of health, environmental, and learning technologies.

Under the leadership of Dr. Peter Singer and Prof. Abdallah Daar, the CPGGH has become recognized around the world as a leading program on genomics and global health. Through Strengthening the Role of Genomics and Global Health, the CPGGH will continue to ensure that developing countries share the scientific, social and economic benefits of the genomics revolution, to prevent the emergence of a “genomics divide,” and to address existing disparities in global human health.

The project aims to strengthen genomics research, development and commercialization activities in the developing world by examining the role of developing world biotechnology companies in meeting local health needs and south-to-south collaboration in genomics innovation. At the same time, the project seeks to ensure that advances in pharmacogenomics are appropriately used to address global health challenges and to ensure the effective mobilization of agricultural genomics knowledge through strategies to promote enduring food security in developing countries.

Strengthening the Role of Genomics and Global Health will ensure that developing countries share in the social and economic benefits of the genomics revolution, increase public awareness of the potential for genomics to address global health and environmental challenges and help mobilize a unique vision for Canada’s role in the world.