Musiba complains bitterly that the company had to do this itself, despite reports that Tanzania is getting $600 million in aid to deal with AIDS. "We asked for assistance and got nothing," he says. "There's a myth that the private sector has the money to handle this on its own."

That is the crux of battles over public–private-sector partnerships on HIV in Africa and elsewhere. The direction of cash flow is often in dispute. As Robin Gorna at the UK Department for International Development tells business leaders: "When you say it makes good business sense, I think: you don't need our money."

For Product Red, public officials note, participating companies demanded 'targeting' of their funds — in this case on AIDS in Africa, rather than the broader remit of the Global Fund — so that they get the kudos. "The only way to get private money into the Global Fund," notes Gorna, "is by earmarking."

Hopes are high for Product Red, though. Since it got going in Britain, with American Express cards, Motorola phones, Armani shades and Gap tee-shirts, "all the feedback has been very positive", says Rajesh Anandan, head of private-sector partnerships at the fund. Anandan explains that the profit-sharing deals on each 'red' product are separately negotiated, to suit items as different as coats and credit cards.

> "When you say it makes good business sense, I think: you don't need our money." — Robin Gorna

He stresses that the campaign must be accessible. "We're trying to reach hundreds of millions of consumers in a cause they haven't thought about," Anandan says, adding that subsequent communication on websites and elsewhere will "get to the heart of the issue" and help revive public awareness of AIDS.

What AIDS officials want most of all from the private sector, according to several speakers at the Chatham House meeting, is their expertise in logistics and financial management. Financial managers at Merck helped with the company's partnership programmes, for example, and management consultants Accenture volunteered to help UNAIDS deal with financial bottlenecks that were slowing national AIDS programmes.

But much more help of this kind is needed. Reasons for the shortfall may be mutual suspicion and a clash of cultures between public and private sectors. "In the private sector, they like to act," observes Elizabeth Mataka, director of the Zambia National AIDS Network, "while we have to talk about structures. We spend for ever doing that, when there is actually a lot to do." ■

See Editorial, page 723.

Product Red ➧ **www.joinred.com**

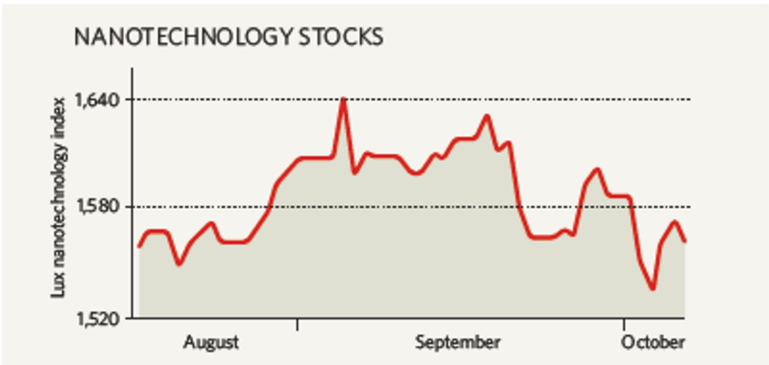
IN BRIEF

VACCINE VALUE US giant Pfizer is buying PowderMed, a vaccine company based in Oxford, UK, for an undisclosed sum. The move reflects burgeoning interest in vaccines among major drug companies in light of the threat of a global flu pandemic, analysts say. PowderMed — which started up two years ago as a spin-off from Chiron, the biotechnology company — is developing vaccines for flu, cancer and AIDS. The vaccines work by using fragments of DNA, blown into the skin. Once the DNA is expressed by cells in the skin, the resulting antigen stimulates an immune response.

AIRBUS AXE Louis Gallois, the new chief executive of Airbus, has warned of "painful" job cuts ahead as the airliner manufacturer adjusts to production problems with its new superjumbo, the A380 (see *Nature* 443, 385; 2006). Reports suggest that up to 10,000 jobs could go at production plants in France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. Airbus has repeatedly delayed delivery dates for its new airliner, with problems said to be connected to the intricate way in which production is divided between the four nations.

BIOTECH BOON Genentech has reported surging profits for the quarter ending in September, with a 58% increase over the corresponding period in 2005. The biotech company's income was driven by US sales of more than $1.8 billion — up by 34% on the previous year. Genentech, based in South San Francisco, sells high-value anticancer agents based on antibodies, including Rituxan for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and Avastin for colon cancer. Lucentis, the company's new drug for age-related vision loss, has already logged sales of $153 million since its launch in June.

MARKET WATCH



It had been a quietly optimistic summer for nanotechnology stocks. But progress was checked in September, with a couple of well-fancied companies suffering reversals.

The Lux Nanotech Index, which measures a basket of smaller companies specializing in nanotechnology and larger ones with interests in its application, ended the third quarter up slightly from August, but well short of its April peak of 1,840.

One company hit was Toronto-based Nucryst, which makes silver nanoparticle wound dressings that have impressed the market. Nevertheless, its share value almost halved after an announcement on 20 September admitting the failure of efficacy trials on NPI 32101, a cream for treating eczema.

Another fashionable nanotech stock on the slide is Minneapolis-based NVE Corporation, a leader in applying spintronics to sensors and memory chips. After almost touching $40 on 17 September, the company's stock has slipped back to less than $28.

British company Cambridge Display Technology fared better, its stock rising sharply after an upgrading by analysts optimistic about the long-term prospects for the company's polymer light-emitting-diode display screens.

According to Peter Hebert, chief executive of Lux Research, the New York-based consultancy that compiles the index, the overall health of the sector is vouched for by a stream of collaborations between small nanotech suppliers and major companies. In August, for example, Turkey's largest oil company, Petrol Ofisi, agreed to work with Oxonica, based in Oxford, UK, to adapt the British company's nanocatalysts as fuel additives.

Colin Macilwain

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