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In a major development, MSD, one of the world's key players in HIV innovative treatment and pharmaceutical giant Cipla - preeminently known for its leading position globally in ensuring treatment for all HIV/AIDS patients, announced the formation of an India-specific strategic partnership. Within the scope of the partnership, Cipla will have a non-exclusive license to market, promote and distribute MSD's raltegravir 400mg tablet, under a different brand name in India. Access to raltegravir is important for patients who require it as part of third line salvage regimen where there are few options left.

Announcing the partnership, Mr KG Ananthkrishnan, managing director, MSD in India said, "MSD is committed to developing innovative therapies that offer advances in the treatment of infectious diseases - including HIV. MSD's efforts to develop treatments for HIV/AIDS have been under way for more than 20 years and continue today. We are proud to have entered into a strategic, India-specific partnership with Cipla. MSD and Cipla both share the same commitment of providing broader access to HIV treatment."

Commenting on the partnership, Dr Jaideep Gogtay, chief medical officer, Cipla said, "This partnership reinforces Cipla's ongoing commitment to HIV/AIDS treatment making life-saving drugs accessible. Raltegravir, a third line therapy treatment will be a value addition to Cipla's portfolio of HIV/AIDS treatment, especially for those patients who are resistant to the 1st and 2nd line therapy treatment. We anticipate this drug being available to patients from middle of this year."

Furthermore, Mr Subhanu Saxena, managing director and global CEO, Cipla added, "We want to ensure that all patients,

particularly in developing countries, get access to the most innovative, breakthrough medicines available. We look forward to more such collaborations ensuring lifesaving drugs like raltegravir reach the patients in need."