

## Novartis launches generic omeprazole in the US

Basel, 19 August 2003 – Novartis announced today that its generics unit Sandoz is launching a generic form of the anti-ulcer treatment Prilosec® (omeprazole) in the US. Sandoz' generic product is being launched under the Lek label and will be available by prescription in 10 and 20mg dosage strengths.

“We believe there is significant interest in providing physicians and their patients in the US with an attractive high-quality alternative to currently available products”, said Christian Seiwald, CEO of Sandoz, which already markets a generic version of omeprazole in Europe.

Sandoz, a Novartis company, is a world leader in generic pharmaceuticals and develops, manufactures and markets these medicines as well as pharmaceutical and biotechnological active ingredients. Altogether, Sandoz employs around 11 500 people worldwide and posted sales of USD 1.8 billion in 2002.

This release contains forward-looking statements that can be identified by forward-looking terminology such as “is launching,” “is being launched,” “will be available,” or similar expressions, or by express or implied discussions regarding potential future revenues from omeprazole. Such statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause actual results to be materially different from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied by such statements. There can be no guarantee that omeprazole will reach any particular sales levels. Management's expectations regarding omeprazole could be affected by, among other things, the risks of patent or other litigation with the originator of omeprazole, market place risks that could adversely affect Novartis affiliates' ability to market omeprazole in the US, government pricing pressures, as well as the other factors discussed in Novartis AG's Form 20-F filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Should one or more of these risks or uncertainties materialize, or should underlying assumptions prove incorrect, actual results may vary materially from those described herein anticipated, believed, estimated or expected.

Novartis AG (NYSE: NVS) is a world leader in pharmaceuticals and consumer health. In 2002, the Group's businesses achieved sales of USD 20.9 billion and a net income of USD 4.7 billion. The Group invested approximately USD 2.8 billion in R&D. Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Novartis Group companies employ about 77 200 people and operate in over 140 countries around the world. For further information please consult <http://www.novartis.com>.

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