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Roche reports strong sales growth in 2019

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Pharmaceuticals Division sales up 12%, driven by high demand for recently launched medicines, mainly Ocrevus, Hemlibra, Tecentriq and Perjeta



Commenting on the Group's results, Roche CEO Severin Schwan said: "The uptake of our newly introduced medicines is very strong. We are successfully entering new disease areas and providing important new treatment options to serve more patients with severe conditions. Based on the strong demand for our new medicines and continued progress of our product pipeline we have raised the outlook for 2019 and I am confident that we will continue to grow beyond this year."

Sales are now expected to grow in the high-single digit range, at constant exchange rates. Core earnings per share are targeted to grow broadly in line with sales, at constant exchange rates. Roche expects to further increase its dividend in Swiss francs.

In the first nine months of 2019, Group sales rose 10% to CHF 46.1 billion. Sales in the Pharmaceuticals Division increased 12% to CHF 36.6 billion. Key growth drivers were the multiple sclerosis medicine Ocrevus, the new haemophilia medicine Hemlibra and cancer medicines Tecentriq, Perjeta and Avastin. The strong uptake of newly introduced medicines more than offset lower sales of Herceptin and of MabThera/Rituxan.

In the US, sales increased 14%, led by Ocrevus, Hemlibra, Tecentriq, Kadcyla, Perjeta and Avastin. Ocrevus sales were driven by both new and returning patient demand.

In Europe (-1%), sales were affected by the competition from biosimilars for Herceptin (-44%) and MabThera/Rituxan (-33%). This decline was almost offset by the strong growth of Ocrevus, Perjeta, Tecentriq, Alecensa and Hemlibra.

In Japan, sales increased 11%, driven by recently launched products, including Hemlibra, Perjeta and Tecentriq. The growth in Japan was partially offset by lower sales of MabThera/Rituxan (-46%) driven by biosimilar competition.

In the International region sales grew 20%, mainly driven by significantly increased numbers of patients benefitting from Roche cancer drugs in China with strong sales of Herceptin, Avastin and MabThera/Rituxan as well as the uptake of Perjeta and Alecensa.

Diagnostics Division sales increased 4% to CHF 9.5 billion. The business area Centralised and Point of Care Solutions (+5%) was the main contributor, with growth driven by the immunodiagnostics business. Growth was reported in Asia-Pacific (+9%), EMEA[2] (+3%) and Latin America (+9%). In North America sales declined 1%.

In February 2019, Roche announced that it had entered into a definitive merger agreement to fully acquire Spark Therapeutics, Inc. ('Spark Therapeutics'). Regulatory review of the transaction is ongoing, and the parties are actively working with the US and UK authorities to facilitate that process. Closing of the transaction is expected until the end of this year.