What science can do

AstraZeneca Annual Report and Form 20-F Information 2021
Chief Executive Officer’s Review

2021 was another remarkable year for AstraZeneca in delivering for patients and one in which we played a leading role in changing the course of the pandemic.

José Baselga: a visionary leader

2021 began, however, on a very sad note with the untimely death of José Baselga, my colleague and friend. José was a brilliant scientist, legendary oncologist and visionary leader. He had a passion for what he did and was always chasing the next and best therapies. He transformed AstraZeneca’s Oncology R&D and accelerated our innovative science – one of the drivers behind our success.

During his brilliant career, José changed the landscape of cancer treatment and thousands of patients have benefited. It was José’s passion and determination when he was at AstraZeneca that drove the development of our pipeline and the recruitment of many incredibly talented scientists.

One of the medicines José championed is Enhertu. Unprecedented results from our DESTINY trials during 2021 more than justify his passion for this unique medicine. The trials both confirm Enhertu’s potential as a new treatment for HER2-positive breast cancer and open the door to its potential use in earlier lines of treatment and other HER2 expressing tumours.

Together with patients around the world, all of us at AstraZeneca owe José a debt of gratitude and we will continue to build on his legacy.

In 2021, despite the ongoing challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, AstraZeneca continued to advance delivery of our strategy – supplying our medicines to patients, as well as launching new ones and expanding into new indications. It was also an outstanding year for our pipeline in progressing the next wave of science and delivering trial results that have the potential to redefine care.

During the year, we welcomed our colleagues from Alexion to the Group. With their expertise in rare diseases, not only is our science base and drive for growth strengthened, but also, more importantly, our ability to make a difference to patients around the world. At the same time, we contributed to the health of society and the planet, notably in our efforts to tackle the biggest public health crisis of our lifetime and reduce our carbon footprint. All of this was underpinned by an organisation living our Values, leading change and transforming the way we work.

I can only touch on a few of our achievements in this Review but, taken together, our efforts ensured we continued to deliver for shareholders in 2021. Total Revenue grew by 41% (38% at CER) to $37,417 million, including COVID-19 vaccine revenues. Excluding COVID-19 revenue, growth was 26% (23% at CER) and was well balanced across our disease areas. We saw double-digit growth in all major regions, including Emerging Markets despite some headwinds in China. We also achieved 14 positive Phase III readouts across nine medicines during the year, and 22 regulatory approvals and authorisations in major markets including five new molecular entities (NME).

In July, we completed our landmark acquisition of Alexion which established our rare disease capability.

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1959-2021,
Executive Vice-President,
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Chief Executive Officer’s Review continued

A vaccine for the world
Patients have also benefited from Vaxzevria, our COVID-19 vaccine, which was first approved for emergency supply in the UK at the end of 2020. Together with our global partners, we supplied about 2.5 billion vaccine doses to more than 180 countries during the year. Of these, approximately two-thirds went to low- and lower-middle-income countries, and more than 247 million were delivered to 130 countries through the COVAX Facility in 2021. It is estimated that Vaxzevria has so far helped prevent 50 million cases of COVID-19, five million hospitalisations, and helped save more than one million lives. It was an honour to have this achievement recognised when we jointly received the 2021 Roy Vagelos Pro Bono Humanum Award for Global Health Equity at the Prix Galien USA Awards Ceremony.

Vaccines are not easy to manufacture and scaling up supply brought challenges. Nevertheless, I am proud of the speed with which we were able to build twelve regional supply chains around the world, relying on our own manufacturing capacity, and sharing our know-how with more than 20 collaborators.

For the future, we remain committed to providing broad and equitable global access to our vaccine.

In addition to delivering our vaccine to the world, our teams rapidly progressed the development of Evusheld, a long-acting antibody (LAAB) combination against COVID-19. It was the first LAAB combination to demonstrate benefit in both preventing and treating COVID-19 and received Emergency Use Authorization from the FDA in December 2021. This authorisation, which has been followed by similar authorisations in other countries, underlines the potential of Evusheld to make a significant difference for people most in need.

Alexion: AstraZeneca Rare Disease
In July, we completed our landmark acquisition of Alexion which established our rare disease capability. Rare diseases represent a significant unmet medical need and we believe Alexion’s innovative complement-biology platform and robust pipeline will continue to pioneer the discovery and development of medicines for these often devastating conditions. It represents a high-growth opportunity and we are already starting to see the delivery of this potential with Ultomiris and the other medicines in the Alexion portfolio, supported by developments such as the acquisition of Caelum Biosciences and their potentially first-in-class mAb for the treatment of amyloid light-chain (AL) amyloidosis.

Moreover, the rest of AstraZeneca can benefit from applying Alexion’s complement-biology platform across our broader early stage pipeline and Alexion’s R&D team can take advantage of the research capabilities available at AstraZeneca to discover new treatments for rare diseases. Patients will also benefit from the opportunity to make existing and future rare disease medicines available in many countries where AstraZeneca already has a strong presence, such as China, where we have established a Rare Disease Unit.

Bridges are already being built between Alexion and the rest of AstraZeneca as we deliver on the full potential of this exciting addition to our range of capabilities.

Addressing the challenge of climate change
In addition to understanding what science can do for patients, AstraZeneca’s team understands the part we need to play in securing the future of the planet. We recognise that the climate crisis is a public health emergency for which there is no vaccine, and no one is immune. As part of our efforts, we are a founding partner of HRH The Prince of Wales’ Sustainable Markets Initiative (SMI), a global ‘coalition of the willing’ who share the vision around the need to accelerate global progress towards a sustainable future. As part of that coalition, we called for coordinated, accelerated action to tackle climate change ahead of the G7 Leaders’ Summit in Cornwall, UK in June.

Those efforts continued in November at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, UK, when I was proud to launch the SMI Health Systems Taskforce as its Champion. Our ambition is to accelerate the delivery of net-zero, patient-centric healthcare.

Unveiling our Discovery Centre
Also in November, it was a privilege to host HRH The Prince of Wales to unveil our Discovery Centre (DISC) in Cambridge, UK. A state-of-the-art R&D facility, DISC can accommodate more than 2,200 research scientists and is built to the world’s highest environmental standards.

DISC is designed to foster collaboration and develop the next generation of science leaders. By accelerating AstraZeneca’s industry-leading levels of productivity, it can drive the next wave of scientific innovation and power the next stage of our growth.

Working for inclusion and diversity
The next wave of innovation will only come from organisations that are both diverse and inclusive. While there is always room for improvement, I am proud of the progress we have made, particularly in ensuring gender balance in our leadership teams.

I was therefore delighted when Susan Galbraith and Aradhana Sarin joined the Senior Executive Team during the year. Susan was appointed in June to lead Oncology R&D in succession to José. She is an outstanding oncologist and leader with a track record of delivering breakthrough science and medicines that have transformed care and improved the lives of patients.

Aradhana assumed the role of Chief Financial Officer in August following the completion of the Alexion acquisition. She has more than 20 years of professional experience spanning operating roles at Alexion and advisory roles at global financial institutions. Marc Dunoyer, our previous CFO, has taken over as Alexion’s CEO and I’d like to pay tribute to him for his tremendous achievements since he joined AstraZeneca, and thank him personally for his outstanding support, which continues in his role as Chief Strategy Officer.

Indeed, I would like to close by thanking everyone at AstraZeneca. Without their continuing and tireless contributions, none of our many achievements in 2021 would have been possible and, with them, I have every confidence in delivering the next chapter in our success.

Pascal Soriot
Chief Executive Officer

The Terra Carta Seal recognises global corporations that are demonstrating their commitment to, and momentum towards, the creation of genuinely sustainable markets.

For more information on our strategy, see Our Strategy and Key Performance Indicators from page 12.