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# NJALA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

(University of Sierra Leone)



**TROPICAL DISEASES RESEARCH UNIT**

**DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES • PMB FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE • WEST AFRICA**

September 28, 1987

Dr Irvin M Asher  
Director  
Science Program  
Office of Science Advisor  
USAID  
Washington DC 20523  
USA

Dear Dr Asher

PROGRESS REPORT FOR USAID INNOVATIVE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
PROJECT NO. 939-5542

This is another progress report as expected of the project agreement (Limited Scope Grant Project Agreement) document signed on 8/13/85 between the United States of America, acting through the Agency for International Development (AID), and the University of Sierra Leone (USL). Again, it was not necessary to send in interim progress reports every six months for reason addressed below.

We have only been able to keep the field contacts going because the equipments ordered and sent through on September 15, 1986, by the USAID Office in Freetown have not yet arrived and with only limited supply of water and electricity, no preliminary work can be done on site in the Less Developed Country (LDC) institution. Coupled with the absence of materials and equipments ordered, work is at a slow pace. We however, hope to make speedy progress once we receive our orders. Despite all the problems outlined, our collaborators continue to make outstanding and encouraging progress. In the laboratories of Drs Bruce M Greene and Tom R Unnasch, an antigen has been developed which has successfully detected prepatent infection in chimpanzees and we hope to use this antigen, to test human sera as a diagnostic tool. The antigen is being refined now and if it is able to recognize human prepatent infection, it would no doubt be a breakthrough in the long search for a sensitive and specific diagnostic test for this chronic debilitating disease of man. I visited the laboratories again from July 26th to August 30th to both observe and learn the new technique. What is outstanding about it is its simple application, usefulness under field conditions and only need refrigeration of the sera and enzyme. It is a molecular biology modification of the Western Blotting Technique.

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The laboratory at Njaly University College campus is almost complete and once finished, the collaborators will visit, so we could start the test on the field together. We however, continue to suffer from long delays in receiving funds from Abidjan even for local travel on the field.

Finally, we cannot even suggest new dates for both the actual starting of the project which will also affect the final project report date. This is obvious as we approach November 30th 1988; date the final progress report would have been due. We certainly hope this long delays will be seriously and genuinely considered when new dates are negotiated.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely



Aiah A Gbakima Ph.D  
Principal Investigator  
USAID Project No. 933-5542

CC: Affairs Office, Freetown (2)  
Dr Bruce M Greene (2)  
Dr J Stockard AFR/TR/HN