Joint Development of ROCK Inhibitor for Glaucoma and Ocular Hypertension Drug Candidate

May 9, 2006, Japan--- Ube Industries, Ltd. (Ube, Japan/ President & Representative Director: Hiroaki Tamura) and Santen Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd (Osaka, Japan / President and CEO: Takakazu Morita) announced that they have reached a basic agreement to jointly develop ROCK* inhibitor (development code: DE-104) as an agent for glaucoma and ocular hypertension, for which they discovered an application possibility for ophthalmic treatment in joint research.

Under the collaborative research agreement concluded between the companies in 2001, they have explored compounds with ROCK inhibitory activity which can be applied to ophthalmic treatment and they have found DE-104 as a promising drug candidate for glaucoma and ocular hypertension. Aiming to acquire marketing approval, they will further collaborate to develop DE-104 as an ophthalmic drug. They will discuss and determine the detailed term and conditions for the agreement of the joint development.

Glaucomatous damage to the optic nerve causes a defect of the visual field. One of the factors leading to the optic nerve disorder is elevation of intraocular pressure caused by aqueous humor outflow resistance. DE-104 is considered to have a different action mechanism from any other existing anti-glaucoma agents. And it is expected to show potent intraocular pressure lowering effect by facilitating aqueous humor outflow from the main route among multiple routes.

Both Ube and Santen are expecting that DE-104 with its new action mechanism will offer more treatment options for glaucoma and ocular hypertension and will contribute to improving patients' quality of life.

<For reference>

ROCK：ROCK（Rho-kinase）is an enzyme to phosphorylate cytoskeletal regulatory proteins and plays important roles in cytoskeletal regulation.

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