

## NSFC and NIH Signed Collaborative MoU in Biomedical Research



NSFC President Chen Yiyu met with Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Beijing on October 14, 2010 and signed a MoU of cooperation in medical research between the two agencies.

Prof. Chen welcomed Dr. Collins' visit to NSFC and pointed out that the recently increasing communication and exchanges between the two agencies have paved a solid foundation for substantial collaboration. Especially since the establishment of NSFC's Department of Health Sciences in 2009, a new platform for effective support to basic research in medical sciences is now in place. Prof. Chen further mentioned that to address diseases threatening the mankind, establishing partnership between the two agencies is an action that conforms to the trend of the times.

Dr. Collins thanked Prof. Chen for receiving the delegation and gave a brief on NIH's new development. He then expressed his hope to further push the substantial collaboration between researchers in medical sciences of the two countries, by taking the advantage of the NSFC-NIH MoU.

Prof. Chen and Dr. Collins accepted media interview after the signing ceremony. They both believed that with the change of our living environment and mode of production, diseases are severely threatening mankind's lives. To address this challenge, the importance and necessity of international cooperation should be fully recognized. China's medical research has gained immense progress in recent years and has passed its beginning stage and stepped into a fast-growing period. The exchanges and cooperation in health research between China and the U. S. is of great strategic significance in promoting governmental bilateral relations and international cooperation for global health research.

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According to the NSFC-NIH MoU, the two agencies will jointly support personnel exchanges, bilateral workshops and collaborative research projects in the field of basic and translational biomedical research.

An Implementation Agreement was further signed by Dr. Collins and Prof. Chen in December 2010 to develop a new China-US Program for biomedical research cooperation. A Joint Working Group (JWG), made up of a specified number of members from both NSFC and NIH, will develop strategic plans for collaboration and facilitate the review and clearance of proposed bilateral projects. Both NSFC and NIH have allocated funds to support joint activities pursued under this program.

For 2011, a pilot joint program was released on Jan. 31 which will support research and exchanges in cancer, allergy, immunology and infectious diseases including HIV/AIDS. NSFC may award up to 300 000 RMB to each project and the estimated number of project to be supported is 33.