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Singapore: Dr Pascal Soriot has been appointed the new chief executive officer (CEO) by AstraZeneca. Dr Soriot will take on his new responsibilities and join the AstraZeneca board as an executive director on October 01, 2012. In his current role he will be responsible for development, manufacturing, commercial operations and administration globally.

Mr Simon Lowth will remain as AstraZeneca's interim CEO until Dr Soriot joins the firm, following which Mr Lowth will resume his responsibilities as chief financial officer and will continue to serve as an executive director on the AstraZeneca board.

Dr Soriot, who is a 53-year-old French national, joined the pharmaceutical industry in 1986. Dr Soriot joins AstraZeneca from Roche, where he served as CEO of the company's pharmaceuticals division since 2010. Prior to that he was CEO of Genentech, where he was credited with leading the successful merger between the San Francisco-based biologics business and Roche.

Dr Soriot said that, "I am excited and honored to have been asked to lead AstraZeneca. Throughout my career I have had enormous respect for the people of AstraZeneca and what they have achieved. No-one is blind to the challenges that confront the pharmaceutical sector and this company, but the underlying strengths of AstraZeneca in delivering on its strategy are clear. AstraZeneca will continue to make a positive difference to patients over the longer term and I'm looking forward to playing my part in shaping that future."

Mr Leif Johansson, chairman, AstraZeneca, said that, "This is a key appointment at an important time for AstraZeneca and we are certain that Pascal's leadership qualities combined with his strategic thinking and relevant experience make him the right person to drive the company to success over the coming years. I am confident that Pascal's approach and his track record of delivering results in innovation-driven businesses will be valued by shareholders and employees alike."