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Novartis ranked No. 1 among pharmaceutical companies in Fortune magazine's "World's Most Admired Companies" survey

- *Novartis achieves top ranking for the first time in annual survey steadily rising from No. 7 in 2003*

Basel, March 13, 2007 – Novartis has been ranked as the No. 1 company worldwide in the pharmaceuticals industry in the latest peer group results of the annual Fortune magazine survey of the "World's Most Admired Companies."

The results were based on a survey of 1,500 pharmaceuticals industry executives and financial analysts worldwide. Companies are ranked on nine attributes including innovation, management quality, people management, quality of products and services, commitment to corporate social responsibility and financial soundness.

Novartis achieved this top ranking, steadily rising its position over the last five years from No. 7 in 2003 and second to Johnson & Johnson in the 2005 and 2006 results.

"We are pleased with this recognition from within the industry because it demonstrates respect from our peers – not only for our strength in innovation and excellent business performance, but also for our commitment to patients and corporate citizenship," said Ann Bailey, Head of Corporate Communications Novartis.

In addition to the peer group industry survey, the Fortune magazine survey includes results of a survey involving about 10,000 senior executives and financial analysts across 30 industries as well as a survey of reputation among US companies.

About Novartis

Novartis AG (NYSE: NVS) is a world leader in offering medicines to protect health, cure disease and improve well-being. Our goal is to discover, develop and successfully market innovative products to treat patients, ease suffering and enhance the quality of life. We are strengthening our medicine-based portfolio, which is focused on strategic growth platforms in innovation-driven pharmaceuticals, high-quality and low-cost generics, human vaccines and leading self-medication OTC brands. Novartis is the only company with leadership positions in these areas. In 2006, the Group's businesses achieved net sales of USD 37.0 billion and net income of USD 7.2 billion. Approximately USD 5.4 billion was invested in R&D. Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Novartis Group companies employ approximately 101,000 associates and operate in over 140 countries around the world.

For more information, please visit <http://www.novartis.com>.

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