

and products” and “enables us to ask the right questions.”

The topic of testing leaves less to be optimistic about, Davies said. Currently no laws require manufacturers to test the health and environmental effects of nanomaterials, and because long-term testing in particular is so costly, companies are often tempted to skip it.

Finally, Davies addressed the question of developing an oversight system in the face of knowledge gaps. Although more information is needed before adequate regulations can be put in place, Davies stressed that it is not too early to start discussing the outlines of such a system. He pointed out that early data suggest that at least 80 nanotechnology consumer products are on the market and more than 600 nanomaterials are being used by manufacturers already—adding some urgency to the issue. In addition, the process of discussion can itself “help foster international harmonization, research, and public participation.”

#### Getting It Right

In his concluding remarks, Davies said that the future of nanotechnology hinges on sustaining public confidence, which in turn depends on adequate government oversight. “Based on polling and focus groups, I believe that the public will hold both government and industry to a higher standard of safety for nanotechnology than it has for any previous technology,” he said. Failure to meet this standard will generate intense public pressure, eliminating the opportunity Davies says the legislative community now has to carefully deliberate with stakeholders. ■

## Identifying Disease Control Priorities in Developing Countries

This spring, the Disease Control Priorities Project (DCPP) released its flagship publication, a second edition of *Disease Control Priorities in Developing Countries*. The book features major contributions from RFF Senior Fellow Ramanan Laxminarayan and Research Associate Jeffrey Chow.

A joint effort of The World Bank, the Fogarty International Center of the National Institutes of Health, and the World Health Organization, DCPP was launched as an ongoing initiative to improve the health of people in developing countries by identifying disease control priorities based on scientific evidence and cost-effectiveness.

One of its early goals was to update *Disease Control Priorities in Developing Countries*, first published by the World Bank in 1993. The original volume examined the treatment priority of 25 conditions based on their public health significance and cost-effectiveness—and has become a catalyzing force in the policymaking and academic worlds.

But much has changed in the 10 years since the book was written. Global health has been transformed by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, for example, and more is known today about the global disease burdens of tobacco, psychiatric disorders, and injury.

In 2002, DCPP approached public health and policy experts around the world for contributions to bring the

book into the 21st century. The resulting volume outlines a stark picture of the current and future state of global health but also offers “best health buys”—the most crucial, proven, and cost-effective health care investments for developing countries.

Ramanan Laxminarayan and Jeffrey Chow were co-authors of one chapter, “Intervention Cost-Effectiveness: Overview of Main Messages,” which summarizes the main findings related to the economics of more than 350 health interventions discussed in this 1,401-page volume. Laxminarayan was also lead author of another chapter, “Drug Resistance.”

Laxminarayan and Chow’s research is featured in four additional chapters on diarrheal diseases, helminth infections (intestinal worms), acute respiratory infections in children, and neurological disorders. In addition, RFF hosted technical workshops for DCPP, including one on discounting.

“The first edition of DCPP arguably did more than any other book to draw attention to the critical role of health in economic development,” says Laxminarayan. “The second edition has the potential to vastly improve how health resources are used in developing countries. Our involvement highlights the important technical skills that RFF offers to improve understanding of the economics of global health.” ■