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Solvay is aboard the Solar Impulse***Solvay's know how, innovative solutions and ultrahigh-performance polymers are contributing to the Solar Impulse airplane***

Solvay, the international chemical and pharmaceutical Group, is proud to announce that its know how, solutions and ultrahigh-performance polymers products have delivered an essential contribution to the success of the Solar Impulse prototype solar airplane. Solvay is the first main sponsor in this very challenging project, which seeks to generate maximum support for technologies that will permit sustainable development. Solar Impulse is an airplane, powered exclusively by photovoltaic cells and capable to fly autonomously, day and night without using any fossil fuels. The prototype of the solar airplane HB-SIA was presented to the press on June 26th in Dübendorf, Switzerland.

Solvay's contribution in know how and solutions consists among others in the development of solutions based on ultra light and ultra performing polymers to replace the heavier metals and in the performance of non-linear numerical stress simulations of the resistance of the ultrahigh performance polymer assemblies. In total 12 Solvay polymers and products and 6,000 parts made of Solvay ultra light polymers are used in the Solar Impulse in various applications and devices such as parts in the throttle box, monitor control unit, battery fixations and bushings-bearings. Other applications and solutions include balls, bolts and screws, washers, shafts, hinges, spacers and other mechanical pieces of all shapes and sizes. Polyamide-imide Torlon®, polyetheretherketone Primospire® and self reinforced polyphenylene Primospire® are the most used ultra polymers for these applications.

The PFPE-based lubricant with a very wide operating temperature range, will allow the airplane to fly in extremely cold and hot conditions as will the cockpit and motor gondolas, made of special polyurethane foam prepared with a Solvay foaming agent.

Solvay's polymers and chemicals are also to increase energy saving and energy efficiency as components in Lithium-batteries to increase their energy density and as an ultra resistant protection film for the photovoltaic cells. Solvay supplied testing services and advice and performed the non-linear stress simulations of the polymer assemblies. The results of the simulations were later confirmed during the stress test of the assemblies.

Solvay has recognized in Solar Impulse the values that have sustained the Solvay Group over the past nearly 150 years: a pioneering spirit, the human dimension, environmental awareness, innovation, in a word the firm belief that chemistry and life sciences are an important part of the solution to the challenges that rise in front of us. "To us as a chemicals and pharmaceuticals manufacturer, Solar Impulse reflected, right from the beginning, the fundamental elements of the formidable human challenge facing us", says Christian Jourquin, Solvay's CEO. "I have quoted sustainable development in its many aspects, and we were firmly convinced that our businesses could come up with solutions to the challenges", he adds.

To achieve sustainable development as a long-term growth strategy, Solvay last year has set a number of ambitious and quantified goals to take up the social, economical and environmental challenges of today and tomorrow. The goals include a substantial increase of energy efficiency of Solvay's production plants and processes. For 2020 Solvay targets a 20% reduction of the emission of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere, a decrease of 20% of the transported volumes by road and a decrease by 20% of its air and water emission index. The full scope of the strategy and goals is detailed in [Towards Sustainable Development](#).

SOLVAY is an international chemical and pharmaceutical Group with headquarters in Brussels. It employs more than 29,000 people in 50 countries. In 2008, its consolidated sales amounted to EUR 9.5 billion, generated by its three sectors of activity: Chemicals, Plastics and Pharmaceuticals. Solvay is listed on the NYSE Euronext stock exchange in Brussels (NYSE Euronext: SOLB.BE - Bloomberg: SOLB.BB - Reuters: SOLBt.BR). Details are available at www.solvay.com.

For further information please contact:

ERIK DE LEYE
Corporate Press Officer
SOLVAY S.A.
Tel: +32 2 509 7230
erik.deleye@solvay.com
www.solvaypress.com

PATRICK VERELST
Head of Investor Relations
SOLVAY S.A.
Tel. +32 2 509 7243
patrick.verelst@solvay.com
www.solvay-investors.com

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