

NOVARTIS AG
Form 20-F
January 28, 2009

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As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on January 28, 2009

**UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**

Washington D.C. 20549

FORM 20-F

- o REGISTRATION STATEMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 12(b) OR 12(g) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

OR

- ý ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934 for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2008

OR

- o TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

OR

- o SHELL COMPANY REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

Commission file number 1-15024

NOVARTIS AG

(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

NOVARTIS Inc.

(Translation of Registrant's name into English)

Switzerland

(Jurisdiction of incorporation or organization)

**Lichtstrasse 35
4056 Basel, Switzerland**

(Address of principal executive offices)

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Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

<u>Title of class</u>	<u>Name of each exchange on which registered</u>
American Depositary Shares each representing 1 share, nominal value CHF 0.50 per share, and shares	New York Stock Exchange, Inc.

Securities registered or to be registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act:

None

Securities for which there is a reporting obligation pursuant to Section 15(d) of the Act:

None

Indicate the number of outstanding shares of each of the issuer's classes of capital or common stock as of the close of the period covered by the annual report:

2,264,852,842 shares

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act.

Yes No

If this report is an annual or transition report, indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days.

Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, or a non-accelerated filer. See definition of "accelerated filer and large accelerated filer" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act (Check one):

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer Non-accelerated filer

Indicate by check mark which basis of accounting the registrant has used to prepare the financial statements included in this filing:

U.S. GAAP International Financial Reporting Standards as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board Other

If "Other" has been checked in response to the previous question indicate by check mark which financial statement item the registrant has elected to follow.

Item 17 Item 18

If this is an annual report, indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act).

Yes No

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INTRODUCTION AND USE OF CERTAIN TERMS

Novartis AG and our consolidated affiliates (Novartis or the Group) publish consolidated financial statements expressed in US dollars. Our consolidated financial statements found in Item 18 of this annual report on Form 20-F (Form 20-F) are those for the year ended December 31, 2008 and are prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB). In this Form 20-F, references to "US dollars", "USD" or "\$" are to the lawful currency of the United States of America; and references to "CHF" are to Swiss francs.

In this Form 20-F, references to the "United States" or to "US" are to the United States of America, references to the European Union (EU) are to the European Union and its 27 member states and references to "Americas" are to North, Central (including the Caribbean) and South America, unless the context otherwise requires; references to "ADS" or "ADSs" are to Novartis American Depositary Shares; references to "associates" are to employees of our affiliates; references to the "FDA" are to the US Food and Drug Administration. All product names appearing in italics are trademarks licensed to or owned by Group companies. Product names identified by a "@" or a " " are trademarks that are not licensed to or owned by the Group. You will find the words "we," "our," "us" and similar words or phrases in this Form 20-F. We use those words to comply with the requirement of the US Securities and Exchange Commission to use "plain English" in public documents like this Form 20-F. For the sake of clarification, each operating company in the Group is legally separate from all other companies in the Group and manages its business independently through its respective board of directors or other top local management body. No Group company operates the business of another Group company nor is any Group company the agent of any other Group company. Each executive identified in this Form 20-F reports directly to other executives of the company by whom the executive is employed, or to that company's board of directors.

FORWARD LOOKING STATEMENTS

This Form 20-F contains certain "forward looking statements" within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, which can be identified by the use of forward-looking terminology such as "will" or "expected", or similar expressions, or by express or implied discussions regarding potential new products, potential new indications for existing products, or regarding potential future revenues from any such products, or potential future sales or earnings of the Novartis Group or any of its divisions or business units; or by discussions of strategy, plans, expectations or intentions. You should not place undue reliance on these statements. Such forward-looking statements reflect the current views of the Company regarding future events, and involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause actual results to be materially different from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied by such statements. There can be no guarantee that any new products will be approved for sale in any market, or that any new indications will be approved for existing products in any market, or that such products will achieve any particular revenue levels. Nor can there be any guarantee that the Novartis Group, or any of its divisions or business units, will achieve any particular financial results. In particular, management's expectations could be affected by, among other things, uncertainties involved in the development of new pharmaceutical products; unexpected clinical trial results, including additional analysis of existing clinical data or unexpected new clinical data; unexpected regulatory actions or delays or government regulation generally; the Group's ability to obtain or maintain patent or other proprietary intellectual property protection, including the uncertainties involved in the US litigation process; competition in general; government, industry, and general public pricing and other political pressures; and the impact that the foregoing factors could have on the values attributed to the Novartis Group's assets and liabilities as recorded in the Group's consolidated balance sheet. Some of these factors are discussed

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in more detail herein, including under "Item 3. Key Information 3.D. Risk factors," "Item 4. Information on the Company," and "Item 5. Operating and Financial Review and Prospects." Should one or more of these risks or uncertainties materialize, or should underlying assumptions prove incorrect, actual results may vary materially from those described in this Form 20-F as anticipated, believed, estimated or expected. We provide the information in this 20-F as of the date of its filing. We do not intend, and do not assume any obligation, to update any information or forward looking statements set out in this Form 20-F.

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PART I

Item 1. Identity of Directors, Senior Management and Advisers

Not applicable.

Item 2. Offer Statistics and Expected Timetable

Not applicable.

Item 3. Key Information

3.A Selected Financial Data

The selected financial information set out below has been extracted from our consolidated financial statements prepared in accordance with IFRS as issued by the IASB. Our consolidated financial statements for the years ended December 31, 2008, 2007 and 2006 are included in "Item 18. Financial Statements" in this Form 20-F.

The results of our Medical Nutrition and Gerber Business Units are shown as discontinued operations for all periods presented, following their divestment in 2007. See "Item 5. Operating and Financial Review and Prospects 5.A Operating Results Factors Affecting Comparability of Year-on-Year Results of Operations" and "Item 18. Financial Statements note 2" for more detailed discussion.

All financial data should be read in conjunction with "Item 5. Operating and Financial Review and Prospects". All financial data presented in this Form 20-F are qualified in their entirety by reference to the consolidated financial statements and their notes.

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	Year Ended December 31,				
	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004 ⁽¹⁾
(\$ millions, except per share information)					
INCOME STATEMENT DATA					
Net sales from continuing operations	41,459	38,072	34,393	29,446	25,685
Operating income from continuing operations	8,964	6,781	7,642	6,507	5,835
Income from associated companies	441	412	264	193	68
Financial income	384	531	354	461	486
Interest expense	(290)	(237)	(266)	(294)	(261)
Income before taxes from continuing operations	9,499	7,487	7,994	6,867	6,128
Taxes	(1,336)	(947)	(1,169)	(986)	(962)
Net income from continuing operations	8,163	6,540	6,825	5,881	5,166
Net income from discontinued operations	70	5,428	377	260	214
Group net income	8,233	11,968	7,202	6,141	5,380
Attributable to:					
Shareholders of Novartis AG	8,195	11,946	7,175	6,130	5,365
Minority interests	38	22	27	11	15
Operating income from discontinued operations (including divestment gains)	70	6,152	532	398	