1st World Conference on Access to Medical Products and International Laws for Trade and Health, in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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I. Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals are the first ever globally-agreed development plan for our entire planet. They are the world's to-do list for a fairer, safer and healthier world by 2030. The Health goals in the SDGs build on the unfinished business of the MDG era (such as on HIV, tuberculosis and malaria) and adds new targets, such as non-communicable diseases, universal health coverage. Trade and globalization have contributed to international and national movement in medical, food and health products across boundaries.

During the World Health Assembly 2017 discussions on the UN High Level Report on access to medicines, it was decided by all Member States to bring up the matter in the Executive Board of WHO, to inform the proposed special session UN discussions in 2018. To enable deeper discussions and a holistic view on access to medicines (including all medical products: medicines, vaccines, devices, diagnostics) the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Indian Society of International Law (ISIL) with the support of WHO is organizing the “1st World Conference on Access to Medical Products and International Laws for Trade and Health in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

Universal health coverage and the interlinked agenda of access to medicines, is one of the regional flagship priorities in the WHO South East Asia Region. Globalization and increase in regional and bilateral trade is a phenomenon where international measures and transfer of technology are becoming critical in national decision making for public health. Certain international trade issues such as intellectual property, government procurement, competition laws, environment, and plurilateral agreements such as on government run enterprises are becoming critical for decision making. The aspirations for trade with access to medical products (medicines, vaccines, medical technologies, diagnostics) and the Sustainable Development Goals for Health need to be considered together to balance for trade and health benefits.

The aim of Conference is to provide a forum for stakeholder participation in access to medicines debate including trade and health policy. The Conference seeks to inform policy in the framework of globalization and trade agreements for access to medical products for achieving SDGs.

II. Background of the Conference

The present overarching ambit of the SDG agenda and the significant role of international engagements particularly trade and contemporary political developments in national countries make it imperative to engage for tangible solutions. This is critical as of the 17 SDGs, Good health and well-being finds direct mention in Goal3. The latter however, is a prerequisite for almost all other SDG goals.

Medicines pricing has been the subject of global debate for some years, calling in question current pricing strategies as well as predominant research and development (R&D) financing models.

The balance between national aspirations and technological advancements in R&D, ICT, production and manufacturing practices could lead to collective and collaborative efforts for global solutions. The 1st Annual Conference would result in informed policy development by information sharing on diverse topics of interest such as: Access to Medical Products, emerging landscape of innovation in health technologies and medical devices, international laws, trade and development including settlement of trade and business disputes.
III. Objective

The main objective of the Conference is exchange of knowledge and expand understanding on contemporary issues in international trade laws and research and innovation for access to medical products to achieve SDG 2030 agenda.

The Specific Objectives are:

1. Engage with a wide set of stakeholders in structured debate on, access to medicines and medical products and trade agreements for upcoming international discussions in the context of SDGs.

2. Promote pragmatic responses to contemporary policy issues on research and innovation landscape and the paradigm shift needed in the changing innovation landscape for medical products and health technologies.

3. Provide recommendations for possible policy coherence on international trade laws and health, including intellectual property covenants for access to medical products.

IV. Discussion Themes

For maximizing the outcomes from the Conference, discussions are proposed on the following broad themes (subject to approval / further advice from Advisory Group):

A. Access to Medical Products

Sub themes

i. Access to Medical products

ii. Recommendations of the UN High Level Report on access to medicines

iii. Regulatory Dimensions to address access for quality, efficacious, safe and affordable medical products including cancer, Hepatitis C, etc.

iv. Use of Internet and information Technology for Accessing medical and health products (Online pharmacies)

B. Innovation and Research & Development for moving towards SDGs. Sub themes

i. Role of Innovation and R&D for Access to medical products, Competition law for Access to Medicines and health products, Bio-technological products, Patents as a tool of innovation, Information Technology

ii. Access to Medical products (new/innovative Medical/ health products/ disease and dosage regimens), Infectious disease control (New initiatives for R&D (Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovation (CEPI) established in January 2016) for development of vaccines for infections of epidemic potential in Ebola context

iii. New technologies providing innovative solutions for healthcare and fostering local production
C. Intellectual Property Rights and Trade for SDGs in the context of Access to Medical Products

Sub themes
i. International framework for access to medicines in the context of R&D and innovation – TRIPS, patent law, competition laws, Right to Health etc.
ii. Patent and Trademarks in standard setting in medical products
iii. Health-related provisions in Free Trade Agreements and Regional Trade Agreements in the context of medical products

V. Participants

Up to 150 invited participants from the networks of individuals and institutions such as:

- Officials and experts from the relevant government sectors such as Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Commerce,
- UN High level panel experts
- Other WHO regions
- Academic experts from universities
- Related civil societies and private sector
- Experts from other countries
- UN agencies, WTO, WIPO, World Bank, Welcome Trust, BMGF, ADB, donors, World Health Organization – all levels
- Participation from Health blocs, e.g. BRICS, SAARC, SEARO countries etc.

VI. Expected Outcomes

(i) Engage with a wide set of stakeholders, on critical issues of innovation, trade and access to medicines for upcoming international discussions on the UN High Level Report on access to medicines for 2018 Executive Board of WHO

(ii) Strategies to promote innovation and access for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and identify linkages between international trade and health policy to achieve SDGs, for access to medical products

(iii) Recommendations for improved policy coherence on international trade and health, intellectual property for access to medical products taking into account globally negotiated commitments.

For more information log on: www.worldsdg2030.org

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