

Virtual expert workshop on good practices in ensuring access to medicines, vaccines and other health products

Concept note

Date and venue **Tuesday, 14 February 2023, 10:00-12:00 and 15:00 to 17:00 (CET) via Webex**

Objectives As requested by the Human Rights Council, in its resolution 50/13, this virtual expert workshop focuses on good practices in ensuring access to medicines, vaccines and other health products. The resolution recognizes that timely, equitable and unhindered access to safe, affordable, effective and quality medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics and other health products and technologies is one of the fundamental elements for the full realization of the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and the correspondent objectives of universal health coverage and health for all, without discrimination, with special attention to reaching those furthest behind first.

The expert workshop aims to:

- Promote greater understanding of the human rights dimension of access to medicines, vaccines and other health products;
- Highlight key elements of a human rights-based approach to access to medicines, vaccines and other health products; and
- Share experiences and identify good practices in ensuring access to medicines, vaccines and other health products with a view to identifying concrete solution-pathways.

Format As requested by the Human Rights Council, this virtual expert workshop will seek to identify good practices in ensuring access to medicines, vaccines and other health products. It will focus, among others, on good practices to promote research and capacity-building initiatives, to enhance international cooperation on and access to science, innovation, technologies, technical assistance and knowledge-sharing; to strengthen regional and local production, to facilitate trade in medicines, vaccines and other health product and to promote the transfer of technology and know-how, as well as to advance the health and care workforce investment agenda.

The expert workshop will consist of two sessions. Each session will last for two hours and include presentations from experts followed by a plenary discussion:

Session one will focus on **policies, good practices and public health responses** to ensure access to medicines, vaccines and other health products;

Session two will focus on **international cooperation, tools and global partnerships** to enhance access to medicines, vaccines and other health products.

A compendium of good practices will be presented to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-third session.

Participants Participants shall be invited as experts given their experience and work on access to medicines, vaccines and other health products.

The expert workshop will be open to representatives of Member States, the treaty bodies and the special procedures, the United Nations system, academia, national human rights institutions and civil society.

Modalities The expert workshop will be held in virtual format, via Webex or pre-recorded video messages. No interpretation will be available.

Please register [here](#). Only those registered will receive the link to join the event, shortly before it starts. Registration will close on 10 February 2023.

Background

Vaccine equity and access to medicines is a fundamental component of the full realization of the right to health. Vaccines, medicines and other health products must not only be produced and made available - they must also be accessible to all persons. Yet, access to vaccines, medicines and other health products remains disturbingly uneven in many places, with poorer health outcomes for women and girls, national, ethnic, religious, racial and linguistic minorities, indigenous populations, persons living in poverty, LGBTI people, persons with disabilities, migrants, particularly undocumented migrants, stateless persons, and others experiencing marginalisation. Improving such access could save millions of lives every year.

Sustainable Development Goal 3 aspires to ensure health and well-being for all, including a bold commitment to end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other communicable diseases by 2030. It also aims to achieve universal health coverage (UCH), and to provide access to safe and effective medicines and vaccines for all. Advocating for access to vaccines and medicines and ensuring a human rights-based approach is an essential part of this process.

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of affordable, timely, equitable and universal access to vaccines to control the pandemic. Though the world had been profoundly fortunate to have had effective COVID-19 vaccines developed at an unprecedented pace, the failure to ensure equitable, affordable, fair, safe, timely and universal access to these vaccines had a direct impact on the right to life and the right to the highest attainable standard of health of millions of people and resulted in many preventable hospitalizations, illnesses and deaths.

In July 2022, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 50/13 in which it calls upon States to promote timely, equitable and unhindered access to safe, effective, quality and affordable medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics, and other health products and technologies.

Background documents

- [Human Rights Council resolution 50/13](#) of 7 July 2022 entitled “Access to medicines, vaccines and other health products in the context of the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health”
- Report of the High Commissioner on the human rights implications of the lack of affordable, timely, equitable and universal access and distribution of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccines and the deepening inequalities between States ([A/HRC/49/35](#))
- [WHO Road Map for Access to Medicines, Vaccines and other Related Health Products 2019–2023](#)
- United Nations Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Access to Medicines ([web page](#)) and [the Panel’s report on promoting innovation and access to health technologies](#) (September 2016)
- [Human Rights Council resolution 41/10](#) of 19 July 2019 entitled “Access to medicines and vaccines in the context of the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health”
- [General Assembly resolution 70/1](#) of 25 September 2015 entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”
- Report of the 2015 Social Forum on Access to Medicines ([A/HRC/29/44](#))
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Anand Grover, on access to medicines ([A/HRC/23/42](#))
- Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General comments [No. 14](#) (2000) and [No. 17](#) (2006)

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