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**Side Event: Access to Medicines, Vaccines and other Health Products**

**Concept Note**

**HRC59**

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| **Date and venue** | **4 July 2025, 14:00 to 15:00, Room XXIV Palais des Nations** |
| **Registration** | **Please register for this event using this** [**INDICO link**](https://indico.un.org/event/1018695/) |
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| **Background** | Access to essential medicines, vaccines, diagnostics, and other health products is a critical element of the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Yet, an estimated 2 billion people continue to lack access to essential medicines, and stark disparities persist both within and between countries.  Inequitable access to medicines, vaccines and other health products negatively affects many human rights, including the right to life, the right to the highest attainable standard of health, the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications, as well as the right to development. Unequal access also exacerbates inequality and discrimination, particularly for individuals and people living in low- and middle-income countries and contributed to widening of inequalities within and between States. It leads to poorer health outcomes particularly for people in vulnerable and marginalized situations or remote areas, including women and girls, persons belonging to minorities, indigenous populations, older persons, persons with disabilities, persons living in poverty or migrants.  Ensuring equitable access to medicines and vaccines encounters multifaceted challenges, such as inadequate health care infrastructure with insufficient healthcare facilities, lack of trained health care professionals and deficient or inexistant distribution networks making it difficult to deliver medicines, vaccines and other health care products effectively. Pricing of medicines, vaccines and other health products may be another critical barrier. Patents and intellectual property rights can lead to higher prices for essential medicines, placing them out of reach for many people and can limit the availability of affordable generic medications in low- and middle-income countries, creating an impediment to access.  Against this background, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 50/13, requesting OHCHR to convene a series of expert consultations and prepare a series of studies to examine challenges, good practices and new developments. Drawing on these events, the comprehensive report presented to 59th session of the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/59/29), analyses the systemic barriers, emerging issues, and human rights-based solutions needed to ensure equitable and universal access. |
| **Objectives** | This side event will serve as a key opportunity to discuss the findings and recommendations of the report, engage Member States and stakeholders in discussion on concrete solutions, and chart a path forward for advancing access in line with international human rights obligations:   * Towards a better understanding of the key human rights challenges in ensuring access, including legal, policy, economic, and governance-related barriers. * To showcase promising practices, solutions, and innovations, including those emerging from the expert consultations conducted by OHCHR.   To support dialogue among States, civil society, UN partners, and other stakeholders on human rights-based approaches to innovation, regulation, procurement, and distribution of health products. |
| **Format** | A 60-minute panel discussion, followed by an interactive Q&A session  **Opening remarks by the Permanent Mission of Brazil**   * Speakers   + **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**   + **World Health Organization (WHO)**   + **Member State representative**   + **International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care (IAHPC)**   The Side Event is open to the participation of Member States and other relevant stakeholders, including United Nations entities, representatives of subregional and regional organisations, international human rights mechanisms, national human rights institutions, civil society organisations, health experts, and relevant stakeholders from across the world. Participants are encouraged to intervene in an interactive way, through questions, comments and sharing of experiences, promising practices and challenges as well as suggested recommendations on the way forward, with a view to stimulating a constructive debate. The Side Event is being held in English only. |
| **Background documents** | * Comprehensive report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on access to medicines, vaccines and other health products in the context of the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health ([A/HRC/59/29](https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/59/29)) * [Human Rights Council resolution 50/13](https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G22/406/74/PDF/G2240674.pdf?OpenElement) 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](https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G22/240/42/PDF/G2224042.pdf?OpenElement)) * 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](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/23/42)) * United Nations Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Access to Medicines ([web page](http://www.unsgaccessmeds.org/reports-documents)) and [the Panel’s report on promoting innovation and access to health technologies](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/562094dee4b0d00c1a3ef761/t/57d9c6ebf5e231b2f02cd3d4/1473890031320/UNSG+HLP+Report+FINAL+12+Sept+2016.pdf) (September 2016) |

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