Pan American Health Organization
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REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE Americas

168th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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RESOLUTION

CE168.R4

INCREASING PRODUCTION CAPACITY FOR ESSENTIAL MEDICINES AND HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES

THE 168th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

Having reviewed the policy *Increasing Production Capacity for Essential Medicines and Heath Technologies* (Document CE168/12),

RESOLVES:

To recommend that the 59th Directing Council adopt a resolution in the following terms:

INCREASING PRODUCTION CAPACITY FOR ESSENTIAL MEDICINES AND HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES

THE 59th DIRECTING COUNCIL,

Having reviewed the policy *Increasing Production Capacity for Essential Medicines and Health Technologies* (Document CD59/___);

Considering that one of the basic principles enshrined in the Constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO) is that "enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, or economic or social condition" and that the "health of all peoples is a fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent upon the fullest co-operation of individuals and States";

Recognizing that access to essential medicines and other health technologies is a global priority and fundamental to universal access to health and universal health coverage, and that some countries face access barriers due to factors such as limited manufacturing capacity and high prices, and that these problems may be exacerbated during public health emergencies or situations of overwhelming demand, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic;

Observing with concern the impact of transport and international trade restrictions on access to raw materials, intermediate inputs, and medicines and other health technologies, including access to substances subject to international control, such as sedatives and analgesics for intubation protocols during the treatment of patients with COVID-19;

Considering Resolution A/RES/74/274 of the United Nations General Assembly, the resolutions *Access and Rational Use of Strategic and High-cost Medicines and Other Health Technologies* (CD55.R12 [2016]), *Public Health, Innovation, and Intellectual Property: A Regional Perspective* (CD48.R15 [2008]), and *COVID-19 Pandemic in the Region of the Americas* (CD58.R9 [2020]) of PAHO, and draft resolution *Strengthening local production of medicines and other health technologies to improve access* (74th World Health Assembly, May 2021),[1] resolutions *COVID-19 response* (WHA73.1 [2020]) and *Improving the transparency of markets for medicines, vaccines, and other health products* (WHA72.8 [2019]) of the World Health Assembly, together with the adoption of the *Global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property* (WHA61.21 [2008]) and its priority actions;

Recalling the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement), in its amended version, and also the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, issued by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Doha in 2001, which states that intellectual property rights can and should be interpreted and implemented in a manner supportive of WTO members' right to protect public health and, in particular, to promote access to medicines for all, and which recognizes the importance of intellectual property protection for the development of new medicines and the concerns about its effects on prices;

Recognizing that health is a precondition and result of sustainable development and calling for the participation of all relevant sectors in coordinated multisectoral action to urgently address the health needs of the population;

Recognizing that the creation and strengthening of national and regional capacity for the development and production of raw materials and essential medicines and other health technologies is important for improving their affordability and accessibility, and

[1] Draft resolution presented to the 74th World Health Assembly, held from 24-31 May 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland.

adequately responding to regional health needs, especially during health emergencies, and that this also contributes to health security and economic and social development;

Recognizing the importance of promoting competition to improve the availability and affordability of medicines and other health technologies consistent with public health policies and needs through, *inter alia*, the manufacture and introduction of generic versions, and especially of essential medicines, in developing countries;

Recognizing the importance of transparency, access to sustainable financing, strengthening of research, and development and transfer of technology under voluntary and mutually agreed terms, as well as the importance of voluntary initiatives such as the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) and Medicines Patent Pool as mechanisms for building and strengthening national and regional capacity for the development and production of raw materials and essential medicines and other health technologies;

Recognizing the need for strengthened national regulatory systems convergent with international standards to help ensure appropriate oversight of the quality, safety, and efficacy of the raw materials, medicines, and other health technologies produced in the Region;

Recognizing that regional and subregional integration can stimulate production through the development of sustainable demand, including the needs of Member States with small markets, and reaffirming the importance of international cooperation and collaboration with regional agencies of the United Nations system and other international and domestic financial institutions,

RESOLVES:

1. To urge the Member States, considering their contexts, needs, vulnerabilities, and priorities, to:

a) promote the implementation of comprehensive national multisectoral policies on essential medicines and other health technologies that include roadmaps for their implementation and the explicit statement of multisectoral priorities for development, production, and equitable universal access;

b) create or strengthen multisectoral governance mechanisms with health sector participation to increase national research, development, innovation, and production capacity, defining roles, respecting sector competencies, and prioritizing attention to regional health needs, with the leadership of national authorities and the collaboration of academia, the private sector, civil society, and international organizations;

c) strengthen national capacity for the development and production of raw materials and essential medicines and other health technologies, including the training of skilled human resources and, where applicable, the strengthening or development

of national infrastructure and clusters that support research, development, innovation, and production activities to better meet health needs and priorities;

d) strengthen the capacity of institutions with enabling and oversight functions for the medicines and other health technologies sector, including the strengthening of national health regulatory systems;

e) develop or strengthen, as appropriate, a coherent policy environment for the health sector and the science and technology, industry, and trade sectors to encourage the promotion of research, development, innovation, technology transfer under voluntary and mutually agreed terms, and the production of quality raw materials, essential medicines, and other health technologies, promoting affordability and accessibility, transparency, effectiveness, and competitiveness, environmental protection, and the sustainability of projects;

f) increase investment in science and technology for the production of raw materials, essential medicines, and other health technologies, and strengthen the incentives for industrial promotion and the use of public procurement that simultaneously fosters affordability, sustainability, competitiveness, development, and regional production;

g) promote international dialogue and collaboration to make progress toward timely, universal, and equitable access to quality-assured, safe, effective, and affordable essential medicines and other health technologies, including their components and precursors, that are necessary for public health emergencies and long-term planning, while ensuring their fair distribution and eliminating unjustifiable access barriers through a joint effort to promote resilient supply chains.

2. To request the Director to:

a) provide technical cooperation to the Member States in developing and implementing comprehensive policies on essential medicines and other health technologies to help strengthen national capacity, meet multisectoral objectives, and improve access to essential medicines and other health technologies;

b) collaborate with the Member States, in coordination with the national health authorities, in promoting technology transfer under voluntary and mutually agreed terms, as well as intraregional activities in science, technology, and innovation, including networks of institutions devoted to research, development, and innovation, and collaboration with regional industrial associations and international financial institutions for economic and social development;

c) promote collaboration and the exchange of information and experiences among Member States with the participation of the health authorities, and prepare model lists to prioritize the needs for medicines and other health technology in the Region in order to guide investment and other incentives for increasing regional development and production;

d) continue to support the Member States by strengthening the capacity of national health regulatory systems to help ensure appropriate oversight of the safety, quality, and efficacy of medicines and other health technologies, including those produced in the Region, by promoting convergence, regulatory harmonization, and networks of national health regulatory authorities;

e) continue promoting transparency of prices and economic data along the value chain of medicines and other health technologies, including those produced locally, in order to foster affordability and access;

f) continue providing technical support—as appropriate and when requested, in collaboration with the national health authorities and competent international organizations like the World Trade Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization, including support for policy processes—to countries that intend to make use of the provisions of the TRIPS Agreement, including the flexibilities recognized by the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, in order to promote access to pharmaceutical products;

g) promote, with the participation of the national health authorities, the development of a regional discussion platform on the challenges and opportunities involved in the production of essential medicines and health technologies, in coordination with the relevant agencies of the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders—a platform which takes into account the deliberations of the WHO World Local Production Forum.

(Fourth meeting, 22 June 2021)