International Alliance of Patients' Organizations
A global voice for patients

IAPO Intervention: Agenda Item 17.1

Substandard/spurious/falsely-labelled/falsified/counterfeit medical products

World Health Organization's 66th World Health Assembly

Thank you Chair. Honourable members of the Assembly, distinguished delegates.

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to address you today on this important public health issue and threat to the wellbeing and safety of patients. The International Alliance of Patients' Organizations is an alliance of patient groups that represents the interests of patients worldwide. We have over 200 members that span over 60 countries and 50 disease areas, representing an estimated 365 million patients.

IAPO has prioritized the issue of substandard/spurious/falsely-labelled/falsified/counterfeit medical products as one of many patient safety issues that are a real danger to patients. These products pose a very real threat to the lives of patients worldwide and are one of many threats to the quality and safety of medicines available to patients.

IAPO is supportive of the 'member-state mechanism' to promote the prevention and control of counterfeit medical products and associated activities. In particular, IAPO is pleased to see the inclusion in its work plan, of actions towards strengthening and capacity building of national and regional regulatory authorities and quality control laboratories. Similarly, IAPO supports the commitment outlined to "communication, education and awareness raising with consumers, health professionals and industry". However, we would like to see more progress in taking this work forward.

Progress on a number of activities outlined in the work plan was achieved by the International Medical Products Anti-Counterfeiting Taskforce and we encourage Member States to *build* on that work, utilising the lessons learnt and resources pledged to tackle counterfeit medical products through the taskforce. In this regard, IAPO believes that the 'member state mechanism' needs to detail how the many stakeholders with expertise, or who may be affected by this threat, will be included. A multi-stakeholder approach is absolutely essential to ensuring success. There are many key stakeholders ranging from health professionals to regulators to patients themselves and it is essential that they are *all* involved meaningfully in this work.

We must not let substandard, spurious, falsely-labelled, falsified, counterfeit medical products undermine trust and confidence in our health systems and we must not delay our efforts to find effective solutions to this critical public health issue. Thank you for your attention

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