



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
NOTE FOR THE PRESS

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COMMISSION ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS, INNOVATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH HOLDS ITS FIRST MEETING IN GENEVA

Geneva - The Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health held its first meeting on 5 – 6 April at the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva. The Commission was established as a result of a World Health Assembly Resolution in 2003 and the members were announced by the WHO Director-General in February this year.

The Commission was established to produce an analysis of intellectual property rights, innovation, and public health, including the question of appropriate funding and incentive mechanisms for the creation of new medicines and other products against diseases that disproportionately affect developing countries.

Welcoming the members of the Commission, LEE Jong-wook, Director-General of WHO said: "Making treatments available for diseases associated with poverty has been a major priority for WHO ever since the organization came into existence. These diseases confront us with highly urgent needs that are usually extremely difficult to meet. Bold and innovative thinking is required - not only to find technical solutions but to find economic, social and political ones as well."

The Commission held discussions with senior officials from WHO, representatives from international organizations (UNCTAD, UNAIDS, WIPO, WTO), from the research-based pharmaceutical industry and civil society.

In her opening remarks, the chairperson of the Commission, Ms Ruth Dreifuss, said: "The advance of medical science is of the utmost importance in attacking these problems. The issue we are asked to address is that medical science tends to focus disproportionately on diseases and ailments of the developed world."

The Commission agreed on a policy of openness in consulting the many different stakeholders with an interest in its work, and in drawing on the expertise they have to offer in supporting the work of the Commission. It requested the Secretariat to compile a register of stakeholders and individuals with expertise to offer. It decided that it would place its publications, and submissions to it, on the Commission website. www.who.int/intellectualproperty

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The Commission's web site was launched on 5 April.

The members of the Commission are listed at: <http://www.who.int/intellectualproperty/background/members/en/>

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