



**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

# **NOTE FOR THE PRESS**



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**Note for the Media WHO/32  
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## **WHO TO UNVEIL GLOBAL ANTI-COUNTERFEITING PLAN**

Geneva: On 15 November, the World Health Organization (WHO) and its partners will officially launch the first ever International Medical Products Anti-counterfeiting Taskforce (IMPACT) and unveil the global plan to combat counterfeit medical products.

At its first official meeting in Bonn, Germany, IMPACT will release the most recent estimates of the number of counterfeit products currently circulating on the world's markets, launch pilot programmes in three countries, and present a tool to strengthen countries' legislative capacity to deal with medical counterfeiting.

IMPACT is focused on five action areas embracing the different national and international sectors related to counterfeiting. These are: legislative and regulatory infrastructure; regulatory implementation; enforcement; technology; and risk communication.

"Without changes and improvements in those key areas, we will not succeed in the fight against counterfeits," said Dr Howard Zucker, WHO Assistant Director-General for Health Technology and Pharmaceuticals. "Counterfeit medicines must be tackled not only through global efforts but also by a truly collaborative, cross-cutting approach involving medicine regulatory authorities, health professionals, enforcement officials, law-makers and industry."

Counterfeit medicines are dangerous products. They promote drug resistant strains of disease and can worsen medical conditions or cause death. They are present on all markets and are increasing as counterfeiters' methods become more sophisticated, infiltrating official channels of distribution as well as using illegal web sites to sell their wares.

Counterfeits are of greater concern in countries with weak regulatory control mechanisms. These are often the countries with the highest burden of disease, the poorest populations and the greatest need for reliable medicines.

The IMPACT initiative was first proposed by WHO at a meeting in Rome in February this year. WHO Member States and all major stakeholders in the global community welcomed the plan to tackle the growing public health threat. The taskforce was created in record time and is now ready to begin work.

The global taskforce is made up of WHO Member States, on a voluntary basis, and more than 20 other major stakeholders, including Interpol, the World Customs Associations, patients' and medical

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organizations, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Associations.

The meeting is hosted and co-organized by the German Ministry of Health.

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**For more information on the task force and the meeting, please view:**

<http://www.who.int/medicines/services/counterfeit/en/index.html>

**Journalists wishing to attend the Bonn meeting may send an e-mail to:** [pressestelle@bmg.bund.de](mailto:pressestelle@bmg.bund.de),  
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