



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

NOTE FOR THE PRESS



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**Note for the media /37
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COUNTRIES INITIATE DISCUSSIONS ON PUBLIC HEALTH INNOVATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Geneva - At a global meeting of Governments convened by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 4-8 December, countries opened discussions on best ways to boost research into medicines and other health products for diseases disproportionately affecting the poor, and the relationship between intellectual property and public health.

The Inter-Governmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property was established by WHO in response to a World Health Assembly resolution in May this year. The resolution, which followed an independent report by the WHO Commission on Intellectual Property and Public Health, took stock of the fact that current medical research and development often do not address the needs of developing countries and that even when products exist poor populations struggle to access them.

Delegates from more than 100 countries and experts from civil society and academia discussed eight principal elements: prioritizing research and development needs; promoting research and development; building and improving innovative capacity; transfer of technology; management of intellectual property; improving delivery and access; ensuring sustainable financing mechanisms; establishing monitoring and reporting systems. These elements will form the basis of negotiations towards a global strategy and plan of action at the next meeting of the Inter-Governmental Group.

The Group will convene again in 2007 to finalize the global strategy and plan of action, which will be presented to the World Health Assembly in May 2008. Work will continue in the coming months. In addition, the Secretariat on Public health, Innovation and Intellectual Property will maintain an open forum for Member States and other stakeholders through web discussions.

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