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**Note for the Media WHO/33
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WORKING GROUP PROGRESSES ON GLOBAL STRATEGY ON PUBLIC HEALTH, INNOVATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Geneva, 10 November 2007 - An intergovernmental working group has made progress in developing a plan to ensure poor populations have better access to medicines and other health products.

The Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property, which includes representatives from 140 nations, is charged with preparing a global strategy and plan of action to stimulate innovation in research and development for diseases that disproportionately affect people in developing countries.

In six days of talks, the group made progress on agreeing basic principles underlying the effort, as well as on some specific elements of the strategy, such as how to promote research and development and prioritize those needs.

The negotiation process represents a significant move forward in building consensus among countries on how best to narrow the health gap between rich and poor. Most of the key issues, including research and development, innovative capacity in the developing world, intellectual property rights and sustainable financing, have come together for discussion in a single forum for the first time.

A resumption of the talks has been tentatively set for April 28 - May 3, 2008 to finalize the strategy and action plan, which is scheduled to be presented to the World Health Assembly, the WHO's annual meeting of its member states, in May 2008.

Note for editors/reporters

For more information on the Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property, visit <http://www.who.int/phi>

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