

McMahon, Stephen
Irish Patients Association, NGO

Summary

- The current situation that allows millions of patients, primarily women and children, to die needlessly every year is a moral outrage that requires urgent attention.

- We believe that it is crucial that patients living in developing countries gain access to the medicines and treatments that they need to live healthy productive lives.

- We believe that the focus must be kept on people (patients) and the amelioration of their needs.
- We recognize that sustained health investment in any State depends on continued economic and political stability in civil society. However we believe that the WHO action plan should focus on addressing issues related to delivery and access to necessary medicines and services, rather than focus primarily on issues related to trade.

- Patients living in developing countries share a host of issues to a greater or lesser degree when trying to gain access to appropriate health care: political instability, corruption, poverty, the inability to get to a hospital, the lack of appropriate infrastructure and access to health care workers, to name but a few.

- We are concerned for the safety of patients living in developing countries if those countries are encouraged to produce targeted de-patented medicines when they do not have the appropriate manufacturing capability or infrastructure in place or quality assured regulatory bodies. Compulsory licensing for this reason must be used with caution if that is the only option.

- The incentives for health care innovation must be brought into alignment for the different stakeholders. Current intellectual property regulation promotes one approach for all situations. A variety of approaches maybe are needed based on the immense differences in the circumstances of different patients without prejudice to the current IP owner.

- A key feature of the WHO strategy must be the aligning of the concerns of all stakeholders. The current situation sometimes brings the interests of patients and researchers or inventors into conflict as well as economic ideologies. We do not wish to see the plan polarize patients in developed and developing countries or societies.
- Patients' Associations often do not have the resources to process and respond to large-scale consultations such as this in a short time frame. It is imperative that everyone be given adequate time to consult on these issues to allow our input into the process.