**Innovation in, and access to, new and emerging health technologies**

A joint technical symposium by the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO)

WTO, Room W

Geneva, 31 October 2019

Innovation in, and access to, health technologies are requisite elements for ensuring progress toward universal health coverage, the right of everyone to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and the achievement of the health-related Sustainable Development Goals. Scientific progress and advances in health technologies, including medicines, vaccines, medical devices, diagnostics, assistive products, cell- and gene-based therapies, and other health technologies have contributed to unprecedented improvements in health outcomes. New and emerging technologies open previously unknown diagnostic and treatment options, having the potential of making an essential contribution to the achievement of universal health coverage.

Despite these great advances, significant challenges remain. Gains in life expectancy and quality of life are unequally shared or distributed between low-, middle-, and high-income countries. Troubling inequalities in the burden of disease are, in part, attributed to the disparate access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines.

This year's Symposium offers a forum for an evidence-based exchange of views and experiences among stakeholders and representatives from different sectors. Innovative, inclusive, and multi-stakeholder initiatives and partnerships that research, develop and facilitate access to novel, needs-based health technologies will be highlighted. The Symposium aims at a better understanding of the impact of emerging technologies in achieving universal health coverage and to assist participants to better assess policy options and envisage possible ways forward.

The first panel will introduce new and emerging technologies and outline options and perspectives for future health outcomes. Biotechnology has been able to develop new diagnostic tools and treatment methods as well as innovative biotherapeutic pharmaceutical products. Information technology (IT) has entered all relevant health fields and is used by health administration professionals to facilitate healthcare data management. Medical and assistive devices can produce a wealth of data as they fulfil their therapeutic functions. Such data can be used as a better empirical basis for system-wide improvements. Data can also be processed directly in advanced IT systems in an increasingly autonomous manner to analyse health conditions and to adapt and personalize treatments to individuals. IT plays an increasing role in diagnosis, research and development (R&D), and treatment, including efforts to provide more personalized treatment. Responding to the evolving global disease burden requires further innovation for specific diseases, and needs-driven research in general, as well as ensuring access to and affordability of new treatments.

The second panel will review opportunities and challenges linked to new technologies from a health, intellectual property and trade perspective. Some of the more complex technologies may require sophisticated know-how and equipment. Access to new technologies may not work through a technology-transfer license since implementing technology may depend on extensive knowledge transfer and an appropriate technical environment, such as a laboratory, information technology equipment, or an appropriate R&D/clinical infrastructure. These requirements can lead to high costs for diagnostics and treatments, which poses new challenges in ensuring patient access and affordability, particularly in environments with high out-of-pocket payments. Increasing healthcare costs also pose problems to health insurance providers in high-income countries. Accessing and processing personal, and possibly sensitive and/or confidential patient data, has its own ethical challenges, including obtaining prior informed consent and the applicability of various personal data protection laws.

The symposium will be held in English only. Participation is open to all interested individuals and organizations. Registration is available at [URL].

**Background**

2019 marks the ten-year anniversary of a focused cooperation between the Secretariats of the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) regarding matters at the crossroads between health, trade and intellectual property. This trilateral cooperation canvasses a broad range of matters falling under the responsibilities of the three organizations, including patterns of innovation and access, factors affecting the production and dissemination of medical technologies, and the interplay between public health, international trade rules and the intellectual property system.

As part of their efforts to provide technical guidance and factual evidence to decision-makers, the organizations have held seven joint technical symposia since 2010 which have reviewed topical issues. The Trilateral Study on *Promoting Access to Medical Technologies and Innovation* has informed policy makers and the interested public in an accessible, systematic format about the wide range of factors that impact innovation and access in the health sector, as well as the policy options that are available to them.

The cooperation offered by the three organizations is characterized by active dialogue, coordination, and partnership, leading to more effective and tailored capacity-building activities based on an informed, factual background. Today, a richer, more diverse, and more inclusive body of empirical data and practical experience is available to guide technical cooperation.

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**Draft Programme**

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| 09.45 – 10.30 | **Roberto Azevêdo**, Director General, WTO **Francis Gurry**, Director General, WIPO**Tedros Adhanom** Ghebreyesus, Director-General, WHO |
| 10.30 – 11.00 | **Presentations by WHO, WIPO and WTO** Global Innovation IndexSpeaker: WIPO (tbc)Essential Medicines ListSpeaker: WHO (tbc)Measuring IP in trade in new technologiesSpeaker: WTO (tbc) |
| 11.00 – 13.00 | **Panel I: The evolving innovation ecosystem for public health** |
|  | Moderator: (tbc) |
|  | Panelists: |
|  | **Michael Altdorfer**, CEO of the Swiss Biotech Association |
|  | **Nathalie Virag**, Senior Principal Scientist, Medtronic |
|  | **Maria Teresa Arredondo**, Full Professor, Bioengineering and Photonics Department, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM), Director of Latin-American Affairs at UPM, Director of Vodafone Chair for Healthcare and e-Inclusion (tbc) |
|  | **Tim Hubbard**, Head of Department of Medical & Molecular Genetics, Kings College London |
|  | **Manuel Juan Otero**, Head of Section, Biomedical Diagnostic Center – Immunology, Hospital Clinic of Barcelona |
| 13.00 – 13.30 | Discussion |
| 13.30 – 14.30 | Lunch Break |
| **14.30 – 16.30** | **Panel II: The health, innovation and trade dimension of new and emerging technologies** |
|  | Moderator: (tbc) |
|  | Panelists: |
|  | **Claudia Vaca**, Pharmacoepidemiologist Founder and head of Think Tank “Medicines, Information and Power”, Universidad Nacional de Colombia |
|  | **Martin Eling**, Director of the Institute of Insurance Economics and Professor in Insurance Management at the University of St.Gallen |
|  | **Jean-Marc Deltorn**, Patent Examiner, European Patent Office |
|  | **TBC** |
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| 16.30 – 17.00 | Discussion |
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| 17h00 – 17h30 | **Closing**Speaker: (tbc) |