



PRESS STATEMENT

DIRECTOR GENERAL OF HEALTH MALAYSIA

72nd WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ON 'IMPROVING THE TRANSPARENCY OF MARKETS FOR MEDICINES, VACCINES, AND OTHER HEALTH PRODUCTS'

The Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH) welcomes a successful resolution laid out on 'Improving the Transparency of Markets for Medicines, Vaccines, and Other Health Products' at the World Health Organization 72nd World Health Assembly (WHA) held on 20th to 28th May 2019, Geneva. This was after intense negotiations with Member States to agree with the draft resolution proposed by Italy. Malaysia is one of the initial six (6) co-sponsors (Greece, Italy, Malaysia, Serbia, Spain and Uganda) to the resolution that gradually gained support from nineteen (19) countries (Andorra, Brazil, Egypt, Eswatini, Greece, India, Italy, Kenya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Portugal, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka and Uganda).

Access to medicines and vaccines is a concern shared by all regions. Malaysia strongly supports the initiative to encourage more transparency and improved policies and actions to ensure fairer pricing and reduction of out-of-pocket payments. The Ministry believes that a sustainable fairer pricing system is needed for both health systems and pharmaceutical industries. This landmark agreement is a first step towards a more open dialogue about price transparency to improve access to medicines.

The resolution urged Member States to undertake measures to publicly share information on prices and reimbursement cost of medicines and improve the public reporting of the patent status information and marketing approval status, among others. A greater price transparency will add as another tool that will change the way drug prices are negotiated by governments and national health systems to fight against the rising cost of healthcare. The Ministry believes this move will help strengthen our government's negotiating position and enhance our ability to obtain more affordable medicines for our people.

The Ministry has put in various measure to increase access to medicines such as pool procurement between inter-ministries, active price negotiations, as well as involvement in research and development (R&D) through partnership by Clinical Research Malaysia (CRM) with R&D institutions such as Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative* (DNDi). We will continue our efforts to improve universal access to medicines and affordable medicines, as one of the components in the National Medicines Policy, where the cost of drugs should not be a barrier for Malaysians to get quality health care. This is in line with our commitment of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), in which people's interest come first to ensure universal access of medicine to the Malaysian people.

Our decision and motivation to support this resolution has always been our patients and the people of Malaysia. We hope to see more positive steps and policies in the near future to see the transparency resolution come to fruition.

Datuk Dr Noor Hisham bin Abdullah

Director General of Health

29 May 2019