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Statements on behalf of the EU

WIPO - Standing Committee on Law of Patents - 25th session - Patents and Health

World Intellectual Property Rights Organization Standing Committee on Law of Patents 25th session - Patents and Health EU Opening Statement

Madam Chair,

The European Union and its Member States are committed to increasing access to affordable medicines and to find solutions to the world's pressing public health challenges and inequities. In line with the 2010 Communication and Council Conclusions on 'the EU role in Global Health', the EU pursues a rights-based approach to health. Strengthening all areas of a health system, including the availability of qualified health workers, the provision of affordable medicines and the adequate financing of the sector, is central to moving towards universal health coverage with quality health services accessible and affordable for all. The quality and integrity of the pharmaceutical distribution chain is also essential to improving public health.

The current innovation model, including the role of trade related to IP, has delivered consistent progress in global public health, leading to key new and improved treatments as well as much extended life expectancy, both in developed and least developed countries. This model already integrates a variety of tools such as incentives for innovation based on intellectual property, on public and private financing and awards or on public research. Such variety is necessary to address situations, where there is a functioning market and those where there could be market failures.

The European Union and its Member States take note of the contribution provided by the Report of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Access to Medicines, and of the subsequent message of the Secretary-General, which encourages all stakeholder to chart a way forward in appropriate fora to ensure access to medicines
and health technologies for all who need them, wherever they are. We would recall that the HLP is not a MS-driven process and that WIPO remains a MS-driven organisation. The HLP report has not been endorsed by any UN body or agency, nor did the members of the HLP reach consensus on the recommendations contained in the report. We would also like to recall the important and authoritative contribution of the tri-lateral WIPO-WTO-WHO study entitled “Promoting access to medical technologies” to discussions on this topic.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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