

## Access to quality medicines gains momentum

High-level event at the 72nd World Health Assembly with several donors in attendance puts the quality of medicines firmly on the health agenda.

22-05-19



Dit is de omschrijving

**Universal health coverage requires access to quality-assured medicines. Unfortunately, substandard and falsified medicines are highly prevalent in many low and middle-income countries (LMICs). In these countries, under-resourced regulatory authorities cannot adequately oversee medicines along complex, globalised supply channels. Representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO), regulators, donors, and operational organizations discussed how to overcome this problem at an event in the margins of the 72nd World Health Assembly in Geneva.**

Catherine Dujardin of the Belgian Directorate-General for Development Cooperation & Humanitarian Aid (DGD) said participants agreed that effective procurement policies and practices must be implemented everywhere, for everyone. "The WHO should and is playing a leading and coordinating role to improve quality of medicines worldwide. The WHO provides guidance on, facilitates information-sharing about and coordinates pharmaceutical quality assurance. To make further progress, member states and private donors should support the expansion of the WHO prequalification programme. They should also support the development of regulatory capacity building programmes."

According to Raffaella Ravinetto, researcher at the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp and policy advisor to DGD, funders and implementers should join the effort. "We need to avoid double standards between medicines marketed in donor countries and those procured for programmes in LMICs. Purchasing only from suppliers with stringent quality systems would reduce risks, incentivise quality, and positively shape the market."

In October 2017, Alexander De Croo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Development Cooperation, and 19 Belgian implementing agencies signed a 'Commitment to Quality Assurance for Pharmaceutical Products'. Belgium is eager to get donors on board too in assuring quality in the procurement of medicines.

The event in Geneva was co-hosted by the government of Belgium, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Sida, the Department of Health, Republic of South Africa and USP.