

# A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

The South Centre offers diverse services to its member States and other developing countries of the Group of 77 and China aimed at improving access to medicines in the context of intellectual property policies.

## Rationale

Improving equity in access to medicines is an essential part of the realization of government responsibilities with regards to the right to health, a fundamental human right that is also legally recognized by many governments.

Among the strategies that governments can employ to improve access to medicines is to promote a competitive market environment with an intellectual property rights (IPR) regime that is supportive of public health goals.

## Approach

Our aim is to support governments to be better equipped to adapt their IPR regimes -policies, laws, regulations and practices-, to support production and procurement of affordable and quality medicines so as to increase their in-country availability in the public and private sector.

At country level, different government institutions are responsible for dealing with IPR and public health issues. The South Centre offers technical assistance on demand to individual institutions, and brings together institutions to discuss a common approach that makes public health policies and the IPR regime mutually supportive.



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## Supporting Progress on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

### Sustainable Development Goal 3 Target 3B:

Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all.

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## Services

The South Centre offers governments the following types of support in this field:

- Expert advisory services, remotely or in-country missions to assist in policy design and assessment
- National and regional capacity building activities for:
  - policy makers across government institutions such as Ministries of Health, Ministries of Trade, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, patent offices
  - patent authorities and examiners to strengthen patent examination processes
  - the judiciary
- South-South cooperation on best practices through educational exchange visits among patent examiners.

**Our team** is composed of experts on IPR and public health. We collaborate with government and academic institutions in developing countries, including local experts. The operative team includes:

- **Prof. Carlos Correa**, Executive Director of the South Centre as of July 2018 and a re-known expert in the field of IPR and public health advising governments and international agencies.
- **Dr. German Velasquez**, Special Health and Policy Advisor to the Executive Director of the South Centre, previously Director of the Secretariat on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property at the World Health Organization until 2010.
- **Dr. Viviana Munoz Tellez**, Coordinator with 12 years trajectory at the South Centre and expertise in management of innovation.
- Three full-time researchers on IPR and health.

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The **South Centre** is an intergovernmental think tank of developing countries with currently 54 developing country member States from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean, based in Geneva, Switzerland. It seeks to promote the common interests of developing countries while recognizing and reflecting their diversity. The main activities of the South Centre include policy research and analysis, technical assistance and capacity building activities, support in international negotiations, and the promotion of South-South cooperation through the sharing of views and experiences.

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**Requests for services and enquiries** can be made to [accesstomedicines@southcentre.int](mailto:accesstomedicines@southcentre.int) or +41 227918050.

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[www.southcentre.int](http://www.southcentre.int)

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