

# THE FIFTH MEETING ON ACCESS TO MEDICINES UNDER UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION

## *Strategies for better access – what works?*

### Summary Report

19-20 September 2018, The Imperial Hotel, New Delhi, India

#### Background

Improving access to essential medicines is central to achieving universal health coverage (UHC) and health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Strategies to improve affordability of medicines and procurement and reimbursement policies can enhance coverage and improve access.

In the Asia Pacific Region, all countries face similar challenges in many aspects of ensuring access to medicines: getting value for money when purchasing medicines and in improving medicines' affordability to health systems and patients. In addition, reducing high out-of-pocket spending through improved policies and strategies for more efficient pricing and procurement is a main goal.

The **Access to Medicines under Universal Health Coverage in the Asia Pacific Region network** was founded in 2014 with annual network meetings to bring together policy-makers from national authorities responsible for pharmaceutical policies; to exchange information and strengthen collaborations on how to improve access to medicines in the Asia Pacific Region. The Network is a joint initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO) Western Pacific and South-East Asia Regions and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and OECD Korea Policy Centre, with support from the WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Systems and Financing at Seoul National University.

The Fifth Meeting was organized with experts from 19 countries of the WHO Western Pacific and South-East Asia Regions to exchange information and share experiences on medicines pricing, procurement and reimbursement policies and strategies, including, systematic approaches to exchange price information, price control mechanisms and more efficient price negotiations. Officials from public procurement, national health insurance and regulatory agencies participated.

#### Meeting Objectives

1. Facilitate the exchange of information and experiences on the use of pricing, procurement and other policies, tools, skills to expand access to essential medicines;
2. Share information on managing medicines prices and ensuring affordability to improve access, especially on low-middle income country settings, including high price innovative therapies;
3. Develop knowledge and skills to improve efficiency of procurement and price negotiations;
4. Promote exchange of experience between countries on the policies and strategies used to lower prices & make medicines more affordable.



Overview of programme:

**Day 1. Global and regional updates and review of Asia Pacific pharmaceutical policies for improving access**

- ⊙ Access to medicines: a changing agenda regionally & globally
- ⊙ Opportunities for getting better value & better coverage
- ⊙ Options for improving price transparency

**Day 2. Moving forward: what actions are needed and feasible within and across countries to get better prices?**

- ⊙ Progress, challenges and lessons learned in countries
- ⊙ Strategies to address challenges individually & collaboratively
- ⊙ Ways forward on collaboration via this network



*Together we will enhance access to essential medicines and medical products, and advance Sustainable Development Goal 3 and the imperative that underpins it: universal health coverage.*

**Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh**  
Regional Director  
WHO South-East Asia Region



*The shared goal of better access to medicines in the Asia Pacific Region can be achieved by strengthening the capacity of this regional network.*

**Mr Ho-Young Maeng**  
Director General Health & Social Policy  
Programme, OECD Korea Policy Centre



*More effective service coverage should result in real health gains... We must broaden our perspectives and think out-of-the box to view access to medicines in a bigger picture.*

**Professor Soonman Kwon**  
Seoul National University  
WHO Collaborating Centre  
Health Systems & Financing

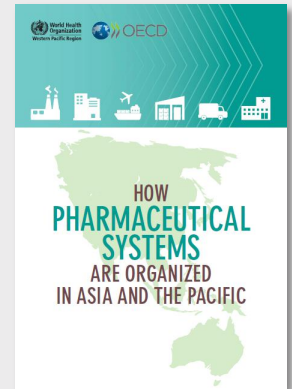
NETWORK UPDATES

**PUBLICATION**

**How pharmaceutical systems are organized in Asia and the Pacific**

August 2018

*Featuring country pharmaceutical profiles*



**PUBLICATION**

**Improving access to medicines in the South-East Asia Region: Progress, Challenges, Priorities**

September 2017

*Featuring country pharmaceutical profiles*



RECENT POLICY NEWS

**MINISTERIAL DECLARATION**

**DELHI DECLARATION**  
Improving access to essential medical products in the South-East Asia Region and beyond

September 2018



Participating countries:

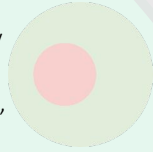
<b>Bangladesh</b>		<b>India</b>		<b>Mongolia</b>		<b>Singapore</b>	
<b>Bhutan</b>		<b>Indonesia</b>		<b>Myanmar</b>		<b>Sri Lanka</b>	
<b>Brunei Darussalam</b>		<b>Lao PDR</b>		<b>Nepal</b>		<b>Thailand</b>	
<b>Cambodia</b>		<b>Malaysia</b>		<b>Philippines</b>		<b>Timor-Leste</b>	
<b>China</b>		<b>Maldives</b>		<b>Republic of Korea</b>		<b>WHO South-East Asia Region (SEAR)</b> <b>WHO Western Pacific Region (WPR)</b>	

*Icons designed by Freepik*

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHTS

**Bangladesh**

- Lower-middle income country
- Strong manufacturing base for quality generics after 1982 National Drug Policy, including price fixation policy
- 98% medicines demand met by domestic manufacturing; low prices, GMP compliance



**Malaysia**

- Upper-middle income country with mixed health system
- National Medicines Policy and Patient Assisted Scheme to procure high cost medicines
- 2018 pooled procurement across 3 Ministries
- Lower priced *Sofosbuvir* (anti-hepatitis C) purchased under compulsory license from Egypt for government use
- Consumer price guide: [pharmacy.gov.my](http://pharmacy.gov.my)
- Medicines price monitoring survey (public v. private)



**Philippines**

- Lower-middle income country with mixed health system
- Share of total pharmaceutical expenditure: public (15%) & private (85%)
- Universal Health Care Bill - 2018 updates:
  - Service delivery: require access through primary care, consolidate providers into networks for referrals
  - Key policies: HTA required for public funds, central price negotiation, generics-only prescribing, conflict of interest rules
- Drug Price Reference Index: <https://dpri.doh.gov.ph/>



**Republic of Korea**

- High income country with single-payer national health insurance
- Population coverage has been achieved and benefit package expanded since 2013
- Reimbursement by economic evaluation - waived for essential & orphan medicines
- Supply issues: disputes from industry to discontinue supply unless government raises price; resulting shortages of essential medicines due to low profitability



**Sri Lanka**

- Lower-middle income country with universal state-funded free healthcare; still 50% use private sector
- Regulation of retail prices for selected essential medicines; tender capping to reduce price of top 10 products consuming 60% budget
- Market authorization for biosimilar products, increasing generic competition for high price medicines
- >90% patients access anti-cancer medicines public sector



**Thailand**

- Upper-middle income country
- Initiative for Coordinated Antidotes Procurement in the South-East Asia Region (iCAPS) and two pathways of emergency response and joint annual procurement launched 2018



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

**Global work towards access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all**

- 2018 Essential in vitro Diagnostic List (EDL)
- WHO Roadmap for access 2019-2023

**How to improve access and affordability at different levels? (colour of concentric circle)**

**1. Health Benefit Package:** guarantee access, universal health coverage

**2. Essential:** revise Essential Medicines /Diagnostic Lists (EML/EDL) & use HTA

**3. Everything else:** update clinical guidelines



**The Fair Pricing Initiative**

- Fair Pricing Forum (Netherlands, 2017)
- Price transparency for high cost drugs, including total rebates & hidden prices

**Health at a Glance Asia/Pacific Publication 2018 updates- [www.oecd.org/health](http://www.oecd.org/health)**

- Key indicators comparing health status and health system performance
- High out-of-pocket spending on medicines

**Impact of trade, intellectual property and regulation on access to medicines:**

- Transparency of product prices & markups
- TRIPS flexibilities for originator products
- South-East Asia Regulatory Network (SEARN) – Information sharing platform

**Value in pharmaceutical pricing: key lessons from OECD countries**

- Value-based pricing and other options
- Guide policies on pharmaceutical spending to increase value ✓ tiered-prices, ✓ rule-based system, ✓ foster competition, ✓ increase transparency to improve trust

**Challenges of costly new oncology medicines**

- Anti-cancer medicines are cost drivers; high prices & uncertain and/or marginal benefits

**Price negotiation of high-cost medicines**

- Options include: compulsory & voluntary licensing, tiered-pricing, pooled procurement, external reference pricing (ERP), managed entry agreement (MEA), price negotiation, health technology assessment (HTA), post market adjustment

**Price transparency & using PIEMEDS for price comparisons- [www.piemeds.com](http://www.piemeds.com)**

- More data shared by countries increases value of platform for authorized users

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

### Medicines Prices

How much should we pay?

How much can we afford to pay?

### PRICE CONTROL

Which medicines?  
At which point?  
What mechanisms?

### PROCUREMENT

Tender: for generic medicines

### NEGOTIATION

Innovator medicines & High cost medicines

### COMPETITION

Shift the competition space from individual medicines to medicines within the same therapeutic categories

### SKILLS MECHANISMS

Training  
Joint/Bilateral

### INFORMATION

Prices paid and rebates  
Comparative analysis/ cost effectiveness, therapeutic value

### TOOLS

Better methodology for collecting data  
PIEMEDS  
(to add information on prices innovator medicines and rebates)

## WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM YOUR NETWORK?

- ❑ **Maintain focus on pricing.** Proposed value-added of network to facilitate sharing of price information (e.g. conduct survey of one high-cost medicine from all members).
- ❑ **Enhance PIEMEDS for price information sharing.** Re-visit process of submitting prices to web-based platform. Focus on priority therapeutic groups (i.e. anti-cancer, injectable antibiotics, hep C, anti-malaria, anti-TB) and develop short price reports.
- ❑ **Continue informal networking.** Connect beyond meeting to support each other, share intelligence and experiences.
- ❑ **Capacity building.** Conduct price negotiation skills workshop in interested countries.

### Proposed collaborative actions:

- **Explore collaboration in price negotiation** (in addition to potential for pooled procurement).
- **Share information on blacklisted manufacturers for insights on quality.** Collect & share links (e.g. Bangladesh).
- **Link information on price & quality** Explore how price information can be linked to quality information shared via other platforms i.e. SEARN Network and Medicines Quality Assurance in the Pacific.
- **Implement Delhi Declaration.** Support implementation of Delhi Declaration actions on information sharing and explore similar Ministerial Roundtable in the Western Pacific Region.
- **Secure communication.** Explore confidential platform with clear rules for communication (i.e. block chain). Manage through a country agreed process.
- **Share government to government, bilateral agreements** and non-disclosure agreements as sample models for network members.
- **Develop price information briefs** on specific therapeutic classes of medicines using PIEMEDS and/ or existing publicly available price information.
- **Evaluate what works.** Collaborations on topics: Analyze top 5 medicines country spends most; evaluate impact of direct price controls, price volume agreements, managed entry schemes.
- **Measure progress on access.** Need for better data and clear indicators to monitor access to medicines (e.g. better data on OOP, mobile app for availability and price) – expert consultation.