

DECLARATION OF ABIDJAN FOR THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRIALIZATION OF WEST AFRICA IN CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

On the occasion of SympoINDUS 2019, symposium for industrialization and pharmaceutical production in West Africa, parallel to the 2nd edition of AFRICA SANTE Expo

February 7-9, 2019, Abidjan

Let us concretely and decidedly commit our states to African integration for the successful access of our populations to quality, safe and affordable healthcare and medicines.

PREAMBLE :

- ACKNOWLEDGING that universal access to quality care and medicines is a fundamental right to improve the health of populations, in accordance with the commitments set out in the Sustainable Development Goals, to which we have all subscribed in September 2015;
- AWARE of the African Union Agenda 2063's challenges, of the West Africa Common Industrial Policy, of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa, of the ECOWAS Regional Pharmaceutical Plan, of the African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization program, of the establishment of the African Medicines Agency by the African Union and of the regional framework of the ECOWAS Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) roadmap for the pharmaceutical industries;
- CONSIDERING the commitment of member States to promote cooperation and integration by adopting common policies, particularly in the industrial sector, in the perspective of a West African Economic Union;
- TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the existence of the new Continental Free Trade Area (FTAA), which aims to strengthen trade between African states, including the ECOWAS region;
- CONCERNED by the harmonization of common policies, by pharmaceutical regulation, by common economic, financial and pharmaceutical policies, by the strengthening of laboratories quality control, by the insufficiency of industrial capacity, by the low competitiveness of existing manufactures, by the high costs of factors of production, by the circulation of substandard and falsified (SF) Medical Products in large number between our borders and within our States, by the inaccessibility of a good a part of our population to essential medicines in particular;
- REAFFIRMING the efforts and commitments made by all African Governments to combat the scourge of substandard and falsified medicines and other health products;
- NOTING with concern that Africa bears 25% of the global burden of disease while producing only 3% of medicines, and that 80% of antiretroviral drugs are dependent on foreign imports;
- CONVINCED of the need to take into account the industrial programs underway in some member States within WAEMU and ECOWAS, as well as past experiences;
- RECALLING that in order to make the West African Common Industrial Policy effective, it is important to add a coherent and realistic action plan and to ensure the development of capacity building programs;

- CONCERNED with promoting harmonized development, with better organizing West Africa's pharmaceutical sector to make it modern and competitive, with having a financing mechanism that is appropriate and adapted to the regional pharmaceutical industry, to improve the financial accessibility of our populations to the most essential drugs;
- DESIROUS of contributing actively to West Africa's Common Industrial Policy and its action plan to make the region's industry efficient and compliant with international standards, and to guarantee access to the most demanding markets, in particular by strong support towards pharmaceutical industrialization;
- AWARE of the public health challenges to face for the implementation of Universal Health Coverages, particularly for the availability and accessibility of quality, affordable, safe and effective essential medicines;
- BELIEVING that the manufacture, distribution and sale of substandard and falsified medical products constitute a crime and a damage to public health and an infringement of public order;
- CONVINCED of the need to pool our efforts to actively contribute to the industrialization of Africa, specifically to pharmaceutical industrialization;
- AWARE of the role of the private sector as accelerating factor of emergence;
- CONSIDERING that Africa plans to be the fastest growing pharmaceutical market;
- ENDORSING the appeal made on 07th February 2019 by the West African Health Organization (WAHO), making regional collaboration between the 15 pharmaceutical regulatory and regulatory agencies in West Africa a priority to strengthen the availability of quality medicines;

THE FIVE CONCRETE ACTIONS OF THE ABIDJAN DECLARATION TO BE IMPLEMENTED

Abidjan Declaration for pharmaceutical industrialization in the ECOWAS zone in centers of excellence focuses on concrete commitments to turn threats into opportunities. Indeed, the emergence of an efficient pharmaceutical industrial sector in all its components (training, manufacturing, import, distribution, dispensing, quality control, ...) in West Africa, will require five (5) concrete actions that must imperatively be implemented. These concrete actions will effectively contribute to the success of universal health coverage, youth employment and improved economic growth, hence of public health. They are:

- 1. The establishment of a Regional Strategic Council, equipped with an executive secretariat** that will be responsible, inter alia, for,
 - (i) giving practical political impulses for the implementation of the regional pharmaceutical industrialization plan,
 - (ii) conducting a study of the regional pharmaceutical market in the context of setting up universal health coverage and developing generic essential medicines, to have a realistic view of market potential, competitive environment and market share capabilities,
 - (iii) consolidating its strategic choices with the assistance of an experienced and multidisciplinary project team capable of covering all aspects of the investment and development plan,
 - (iv) monitoring and evaluating the investment and development plan of the pharmaceutical industry,
 - (v) bringing together ECOWAS, AfDB, UNIDO, WAPMA representing the ECOWAS pharmaceutical industries, a representative for the investors and two representatives of development partners to define new strategies for efficient pharmaceutical industrialization.

2. **The creation of a collaborative platform with a regional focus** bringing together the pharmaceutical manufacturers, regulatory professionals and experts, scholars, investors, health insurance bodies, and development partners in order to:
 - (i) strengthen the synergy and complementarity of fundings,
 - (ii) provide a dialogue framework to consider more coordinated technical solutions leading to the effective strengthening of the pharmaceutical production system in all its components.

3. **The development of a strategy** geared towards:
 - (i) the creation of centers of excellence in the West African region in the fields of human resources training and regulatory missions as well as industrial production and distribution, in accordance with international standards of Good Practice, within a regional integration framework that can guarantee the competitiveness of industrial sites and the sustainability of investments,
 - (ii) the creation of regional champion pharmaceutical companies, including not only the manufactures, but also distribution and quality control firms that will significantly contribute to regional GDP and also work to transform economic structures, create jobs and improve the quality of economic growth with a focus on inclusion,
 - (iii) the promotion in the field of the pharmaceutical industry of public-public, public-private, and private-private partnerships, facilitated by governments, in order to mobilize the necessary energy and resources for the development of this industry in the ECOWAS zone,
 - (iv) the promotion of new technologies, particularly in research, development and in the imperative production of generic and essential medicinal active ingredients through the deployment of the so-called « green » chemistry, as well as the production of strategic pharmaceutical inputs.
 - (v) the Strengthening, developing and securing of financial sustainability of the National Purchasing Centers of the Members States, with a view to ensuring the distribution of local and regional production,
 - (vi) the improvement of the value chain in the distribution of pharmaceutical products (pharmaceutical distributors hub) by optimizing the circuit in reducing the number of intermediaries between the producer and the patient.

4. **The establishment of a regional investment fund and of an investment and pharmaceutical industrial development plan for non-competitive projects in ECOWAS:**
 - (i) financed up to 868 million USD over the next 5 years and distributed as follows: 521 million USD for public-private investments and a 347 million USD guarantee fund for pharmaceutical companies,
 - (ii) Acting under the leadership of ECOWAS and working closely with multilateral development finance institutions such as the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, this regional fund would accelerate the mobilization of funds in local and domestic capital markets, the collection of contributions from African governments and the delivery of official development assistance,
 - (iii) Ensuring monitoring and evaluation in the implementation of the investment and development plan,
 - (iv) Fueled by innovative financing such as carbon taxation on imported products or taxation on financial transactions, and also by developing South-South and North-South cooperation to make essential investments aiming at unlocking the industrial potential.

5. **The creation of a dynamic business environment conducive to industrial development,** particularly through:
 - (i) better Governance,
 - (ii) more efficient regulation of the pharmaceutical industry based on the autonomy and the effectiveness of the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Authorities, on the joint assessment of certification applications, on the joint assessment and inspection of production sites, and on quality control including post-market health products.
 - (iii) more appropriate investment codes and incentives for pharmaceutical industrialization, or even the removal of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers within ECOWAS,

- (iv) appropriate reforms that will attract private investment, so that the private sector contributes to the development of new growth drivers, by taking into account the so-called traditional economy, while preserving the African cultures and traditions that form the nexus economy, culture and ecology.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Call on ECOWAS Member States to carry out appropriate reforms to improve performance in the regulation of the pharmaceutical industry in order to attract investment and contribute to public health.
- Complete the study of the regional pharmaceutical market to allow a realistic vision of the market potential, of the competitive environment and of market share capacity.
- Harmonize and strengthen regional pharmaceutical regulations in order to create the West Africa Pharmaceutical Regulation Agency.
- Bring the Abidjan Declaration for the pharmaceutical industrialization of the West Economic Area in centers of excellence to the attention of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to be taken into account at the next Ministerial Session in order to turn it into « Abidjan Declaration ».

ABIDJAN, FEBRUARY 09th, 2019