Africa needs more efficient regulatory systems to improve access to medicines

More than 150 regulatory experts from around 40 different countries are gathered in Dakar Senegal. They represent governmental agencies, multilateral organizations, industry, civil society and more to discuss ways to accelerate availability of medicines and vaccines for patients in Africa.

Dakar, 27 April 2015 – DIA (Drug Information Association), the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA) with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the World Bank Group, bring together more than 160 regulatory experts and global health leaders from Africa, Europe, and North America to discuss pragmatic solutions that would improve and strengthen regulatory systems and move towards more convergence.

“Regulatory stakeholders from around Africa and beyond will share insights on meeting patient needs, lessons learnt from current regulatory landscape, fostering regionally harmonized regulator systems, and forge meaningful dialogue,” said Mr Ibrahima Wone Secretary General of the Minister of Health and Social Action of Senegal in his opening remarks. “Senegal stands firm on the importance of regulatory convergence and the need for us to determine what we need in our region. As regulators we each need to be committed, engaged and proactive.”

In Africa today, it could take up to five years longer for medicines to be available for patients than for those in other parts of the world. As national regulatory agencies each carry out inspections of manufacturing sites for regulatory approval, this wastes resources, delays availability, and adds cost. Moreover, because of slow review times we have products in the market with incomplete safety information which is not in the best interest to healthcare professionals and patients. These are just few examples where improvements are necessary.

Andreas Seiter, on behalf of the World Bank Group, said “The World Bank is actively supporting regulatory harmonization and capacity building through financing (Trust Fund), project management, stakeholder engagement and knowledge sharing. This is precisely why we are engaged in regulatory platforms such as the African Regulatory Conference. We focus on Africa as the current regional and national systems have significant gaps, in particular affecting the poor in Low and (to a lesser extent) Middle Income Countries. We believe that better regional and global cooperation and “division of labour” can indeed make genuine difference for regulatory system strengthening.”
Press release

“Capacity building and global collaboration is key to today’s healthcare ecosystem. Our work in Africa gives us the opportunity to bring together a diverse and yet similar group of colleagues to promote networking and knowledge sharing between all stakeholders working towards the advancement of regulatory harmonization and access to safe medicines regionally through our regional conferences and local training,” says Jytte Lyngvig, Senior Vice President and Managing Director, DIA Europe, Middle East & Africa.

“As a public health stakeholder, IFPMA is committed to regulatory system strengthening and puts particular emphasis on regulatory harmonization and capacity building efforts. In 2015, together with our partner DIA, we have organized regulatory conferences in Chinese Taipei and now here in Senegal to provide a platform both in Asia and Africa for exchange among key regulatory stakeholders,” says Eduardo Pisani, Director General of IFPMA.

Media roundtable
Media are invited to attend tomorrow’s “What’s needed to accelerate access to medicines and vaccines in Africa” media roundtable moderated by Claire Hedon from Radio France Internationale. The event will take place on Tuesday, 28 April from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm. For more here: http://www.ifpma.org/events/other-ifpma-events/arc-media-roundtable.html

About DIA

DIA is a global community representing thousands of stakeholders working together to bring safe and effective products to patients. Our association creates unparalleled opportunities for regulators, innovators and influencers in the life cycle product development process to exchange knowledge and collaborate in a neutral setting. DIA is an independent, nonprofit organization with its global center in Washington, D.C., USA, and regional offices covering the Americas (Horsham, Pa., USA); Europe, Africa and the Middle East (Basel, Switzerland); and Asia (Tokyo, Mumbai and Beijing). For more information, visit http://www.diahome.org

About IFPMA

IFPMA represents the research-based pharmaceutical companies and associations across the globe. The research-based pharmaceutical industry’s 2 million employees research, develop and provide medicines and vaccines that improve the life of patients worldwide. Based in Geneva, IFPMA has official relations with the United Nations and contributes industry expertise to help the global health community find solutions that improve global health. - See more at: www.ifpma.org

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