

The WHO prequalification of medicines programme, in conjunction with the prequalification of vaccines and diagnostics programmes, held the sixth consultative stakeholders meeting at the Centre International de Conférences, Geneva, Switzerland, on 4 April 2011. This was followed by a meeting with manufacturers on 5 April 2011, organized by the WHO prequalification of medicines and vaccines programmes.

The objective of both meetings was to facilitate discussions between representatives of individual manufacturers of medicines, vaccines and diagnostics and assessors and inspectors of medicines prequalification from around the world.

The prequalification programme aims to make quality priority medicines available for the benefit of those in need. Hence, the two meetings assisted in setting plans for enhancing the cooperation between programme assessors and inspectors, national regulatory agencies and manufacturers, as well as setting future plans for the next 5 years.

Three parallel workshops, each hosted by the respective programme, were conducted on the first day. Important topics relevant to the future of prequalification were discussed. The second day was of a more technical nature; separate meetings for the prequalification of the medicines and vaccines programmes were arranged mainly concerned with manufacturers involved in the programme. A side meeting was held to discuss the implementation plan for the prequalification programme in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. The aim of this meeting was to further enhance capacity-building, technical assistance and engagement of regional regulators and manufacturers in the programme.

Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director General, has established the prequalification programme as a priority due to its high relevance to the Organization's mandate and its commendable added value to Member States. WHO may widen the scope of the programme to involve the prequalification of other health commodities.

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