# MAURITIAN government RESPONSE

## OHCHR Analytical Study on Key Challenges in Ensuring Access to Medicines, Vaccines and Other Health Products (HRC resolution 50/13)

**1. What are the major obstacles at the national, regional and international levels to ensure equitable access to medicines, vaccines and other health products?**

Distribution of medicines and vaccines is free in Mauritius and in public health institutions and there is no obstacle to ensure equitable access to same and other health products.

Mauritius is dependent on the importation of pharmaceutical products, including vaccinations, medical consumables and equipment.

Government is encouraging the local production of medical consumables and pharmaceutical products. To this end, the Mauritius Institute of Biotechnology has been set up and pharmaceutical companies and potential investors are being invited to participate in this undertaking.

**2. Please elaborate on the specific barriers, if any, that women and girls, older persons, children, persons living in poverty, or other persons or groups in situations of vulnerability or marginalization face in accessing medicines, vaccines and other health products.**

The Government of Mauritius provides for free public health care including medicines, vaccines and other health products to all its citizens, including children without any discrimination. The population has free public health care to over 150 primary health care points located across the island.

**3. Are there any legal or regulatory challenges that impact the accessibility and affordability of medicines, vaccines and other health products?**

Since parallel import is not authorised in Mauritius, sometimes the country is faced with stock out situation for products with Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). This may impact on the accessibility to cheaper medicines.

**4. From your perspective, what are the main challenges in terms of international cooperation, partnerships and collaboration to ensure access to medicines, vaccines and other health products?**

The logistics of distributing and storing vaccines which need specific temperature, for example ultra-cold chain temperature for Pfizer vaccine, may pose challenges, particularly in resource-constrained settings.

Strengthening supply chains and improving distribution networks are essential for ensuring timely access.

**5. What impact, if any, does the existing intellectual property rights regime have on access to medicines, vaccines and other health products. How can global efforts better address intellectual property rights and technology transfer issues to enhance access to medicines, vaccines and other health products?**

Existing intellectual property rights regime may impact on countries for access to the required products at affordable prices and thus undermining the judicious use of scarce financial resources especially in the time of both economic and epidemic crises

However, to address these obstacles, normally the World Trade Organization and its member states work on proposals of waiver from certain provisions of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, for e.g. for the prevention, containment and treatment of Covid-19. These waivers are considered as beneficial to protect public health, meet the growing supply-demand gap and promote access to vaccines and medicines for all.

The waivers also have an important impact on costs of the health products and technologies required for the epidemics.

**6. What are the main challenges to ensure the quality, safety and efficacy of medicines and vaccines?**

Having in place a well-equipped quality control laboratory to ensure quality and safety of products and adequate cold room for vaccines and storage facilities.

**7. What obstacles do you see to ensuring the affordability of medicines, vaccines and other health products?**

Difficulty in negotiating prices of drugs particularly since Mauritius is a limited market with a small population.

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