



## Most prominent measures taken by Saudi Arabia regarding to promote and protect right to health

This memorandum was prepared in response to the circular memorandum received from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), regarding OHCHR's intention to develop analytical study on key challenges in ensuring access to medicines, vaccines and other health products (HRC resolution 50/13). Following is an account of the most prominent measures taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in this regard:

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

- Challenges hindering equitable access to medicines, vaccines, and other health products could include rising costs, inadequate manufacturing capabilities, lack of access to technologies and raw materials, and IP restrictions. Investments in relevant R&D are just starting.

**(b) 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 social norm in Saudi Arabia give priority to women and older persons in many aspects of life including access to healthcare and healthcare products. Additionally, a set of policies have recently been introduced with great success to institutionalize gender equity in a socially acceptable manner. Maternity and childhood healthcare has been a pillar in primary healthcare for decades. Reproductive health program received a major boost through integration with family planning activities. Older population constitute around 3.7% of Saudi Arabia's population. Geriatric care is evolving as an important medical specialty. Home Care Services for Seniors serves more than 30 thousand individuals in Saudi Arabia. Few nursing homes (residential care) are scattered serving older people who do not have functional family support. The ministry of health provides full access to health care







(including medicine, vaccines, and other healthcare supplies) in nursing homes. Access to healthcare at full scale is free for citizens and foreigners. Therefore, personal income should not interfere with equity when it comes to healthcare.

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

- The Kingdom's laws and institutions join hands in promoting the right to health for all citizens and residents on an equal basis. Article 31 of the Basic Law of Governance stipulates that the State is responsible for public health, and for providing health care for every citizen and his family in cases of emergency, disease, disability and old age. Out of this commitment, a legal and institutional framework has been built to respect, protect and fulfill the right to health. The health Law, issued on 4/6/2002, aims to provide comprehensive and integrated health care to the entire population in a fair and accessible manner. The Cooperative Health Insurance Law, issued on 12/8/1999, laid down rules for the provision and regulation of health care for all residents in the Kingdom, all Saudis working in the private sector, as well as individuals with whom employment contracts were concluded, regardless of the amount of their wages.

**(d) Please elaborate on the impact of research and development models for pharmaceuticals and other health technologies, including emerging digital technologies, on the access to medicines, vaccines, and other health products?**

- The interruption of supply chains of some medicinal, vaccines and other medical supplies during the pandemic accelerated a myriad of actions including: the launch of a massive localization program for essential medical products, a research and development hub focusing on new technologies and a regional supply chain targeting raw materials required for medical products industries.







**(e) 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?**

- Main challenges in terms of international cooperation, partnerships and collaboration could include: lack of global supply chains for medical products and raw materials. Technology and know-how transfer are hindered by intellectual property protections. Lack of globally accepted listing for essential medical products/devices (one exception is the WHO essential list of medications)

**(f) 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?**

- Intellectual property protections laws are essential, but they form in their current format, barriers to equity and universal health coverage concepts. Obtaining a TRIPS waiver for vaccines, diagnostics and treatments required for pandemic response would set a good precedent. This can be replicated for essential medicines, other vaccines and medical products.

**(g) What are the main challenges to ensure the quality, safety and efficacy of medicines and vaccines?**

- See above, Answer (A)

**(h) What obstacles do you see to ensuring the affordability of medicines, vaccines, and other health products?**

- Localization of manufacturing, Accessibility to generics and biosimilars and ensuring their quality, securing global supply chains of raw materials and protecting them from geopolitical tensions, Expansion of tech transfer networks like mRNA vaccine hubs.







(i) What concrete recommendations would you make to enhance access to medicines, vaccines and other health products?

- Create a globally accepted listing for essential medical products/devices. Obtaining a TRIPS waiver for products/devices in the global essential list. Create and protect a global supply chain for materials required to manufacture products/devices in the global essential list. Enhance and globalize mass procurement processes of products/devices in the global essential list. Consider global strategic stockpiling of products/devices in the global essential list.