

CIPIH report: main recommendations

The independent Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health (CIPIH) was set up by WHO Member States at the World Health Assembly (WHA) in May 2003 to investigate how to improve access to health products for diseases that mainly affect developing countries, given current international and national rules on patent rights. The commission's final report, *Public health, innovation and intellectual property rights*, was published on 3 April 2006. WHO Member States will debate the issues it raises at the WHA from 22 to 27 May 2006, and decide whether to adopt a resolution on the subject. Resolution EB117.R13 on intellectual property rights has been submitted to the WHA for consideration already. Among more than 50 recommendations of the CIPIH report, were the following:

Governments should:

- avoid provisions in bilateral trade agreements that could reduce access to medicines in developing countries
- increase funding for research projects

- run by public–private partnerships and by developing countries, and make that funding more sustainable
- develop advance purchase schemes to contribute to the development of vaccines, medicines and diagnostics
- incorporate digital libraries of traditional medical knowledge into their patent offices' data to ensure that data contained in them are considered when patent applications are processed
- make available reliable information on the patents they have granted
- amend their laws to allow compulsory licensing for export consistent with the TRIPS Agreement
- eliminate tariffs and taxes on health-care products.

Governments of developing countries should:

- promote health research that is in line with public health needs
- promote the use of research exemption as part of their patent law
- invest appropriately in health delivery infrastructure

- improve financing of the purchase of medicines and vaccines
- make use of compulsory licensing provisions, where this will promote innovation or access to medicines.

WHO and other international agencies should:

- develop a global plan of action to secure more sustainable funding to develop new products and make those products more accessible
- encourage the creation of patent pools where this would facilitate product development
- monitor the impact of intellectual property rights from a public health perspective.

Companies should:

- adopt transparent and consistent pricing policies
- reduce prices for developing countries
- avoid filing patents or enforcing them in low-income developing countries in ways that would inhibit access to their products.

The report is available at: www.who.int/intellectualproperty. ■

Recent news from WHO

- WHO marked the 20th anniversary of the **nuclear reactor explosion at Chernobyl** in Ukraine on 26 April, the world's worst-ever civil nuclear accident with the launch of a new WHO report: *Health effects of the Chernobyl accident and special health care programmes*. The report contains new findings on the devastating **health effects of radiation** on people living in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Among those findings, it estimates that 5000 people, who were children and adolescents at the time, have been diagnosed with thyroid cancer as a result of the disaster. The report estimates that there will be approximately 9000 excess deaths from cancer due to Chernobyl among the people living in the most affected areas in those three countries. http://www.who.int/ionizing_radiation/chernobyl/en/index.html
- Several countries are on track to eliminate the infectious eye disease, **blinding trachoma**, WHO said on 10 April. The estimated number of people affected by trachoma has fallen from 360 million people in 1985 to 80 million people today. This is the result of efforts by the WHO Alliance for the Global Elimination of Blinding Trachoma combined with socioeconomic development.
- The *World Health Report 2006: Working together for health* was launched on 7 April, **World Health Day 2006**. The report, which highlights the plight of 57 developing countries with serious **shortages of health workers**, estimates that more than four million additional doctors, nurses, midwives, managers and public health workers are urgently needed to meet health-care needs in these countries, 36 of which are in sub-Saharan Africa. <http://www.who.int/whr/2006/en/index.html>
- The 8th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion, the main international gathering of injury and violence prevention researchers, practitioners and advocates, was held from 2 to 5 April in Durban, South Africa. The biannual conference focused on a scientific approach to **injury and violence prevention**.

For more about these and other WHO news items please see: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/2006/en/index.html>

