

The 71st Session of WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia Intervention on Provisional Agenda Item 8.2: The Decade of Health Workforce Strengthening in the SEA Region 2015–2024: Second Review of Progress, Challenges, Capacities and Opportunities

Thank you for providing the US Pharmacopeial Convention (USP) with an opportunity to share our comments. We recognize the leadership role of the WHO SEARO in strengthening regulatory systems for medical products.

Discussions on strengthening health work force often focuses on the critical need for skilled providers at the point of care, of the health workforce also requires skilled regulators, chemists, pharmacists, and scientists. Together, these professionals form essential components of regulatory and healthcare systems. Ineffective regulatory systems can themselves be a barrier to patients getting the proper medicines and care they need.

We recognize the [The Regulatory system strengthening for medical products](#) report to the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly (WHA 67.20) tenets for strengthening and augmenting regulatory capacity and workforce. They include:

- 1) Engaging in networks of National Regulatory Authorities at different levels
- 2) Supporting regulatory systems strengthening in plans to develop or expand local/regional medicines production capacity
- 3) Pooling regulatory capacities where possible
- 4) Recognizing medical product regulatory systems as an essential component of health systems

We appreciate the efforts of WHO and member states in advancing this agenda and suggest WHO continue to develop Good Regulatory Practices, Good Reliance Practices and quality management systems for regulatory agencies, to promote ‘smart regulation’, wise investment and the adoption of approaches for regulators to effectively deal with current challenges.

In summary, efforts to strengthen the health workforce should include regulatory as well as allied health professionals outside of direct patient care providers. To this end, USP is working with the U.S. Agency for International Development through the Promoting the Quality of Medicines (PQM) program which provides technical assistance to National Medicines Regulatory Authorities (NMRAs) and official medicines control laboratories to develop capacity in medicines evaluation, inspection, and quality surveillance. USP also offers many educational and executive training programs in critical areas of analytical chemistry and standards development.

USP is committed to working with NMRAs to strengthen the building blocks of effective regulatory systems to develop capacity and effectively utilize public quality standards, including the capacity of regulatory health professionals.

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