



WTO OMC

11TH WHO-WIPO-WTO TRILATERAL SYMPOSIUM

DDG HILL CLOSING REMARKS

13 DECEMBER 2024, 16H15 – 16H30

1. It has really been an insightful day, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone here: Our keynote speaker, insightful panelists, and engaged participants. Your contributions have made today an enriching experience.

2. This morning, our Directors-Generals converged on the need for collaboration to tackle the mounting burden of NCDs. We need increased investment, policy reform, and focus on the structural and the systemic drivers of health issues.

3. I would like to share some of the solutions and approaches to tackle NCDs that resonated strongly with me:

- One is the important focus on innovation in health technologies and how crucial it is for tackling NCDs. We need to foster an environment that encourages scientific research and development while ensuring that new treatments remain accessible and affordable for all.
- I also noted that some of these solutions are long-term. As we foster innovation ecosystems and local and regional manufacturing capacities in different areas we should go beyond a one-way transfer of technology and know-how and empower countries and regions to emerge as hubs of innovation and technology.

4. The lessons we have all learned from the COVID-19 pandemic also came up several times during this day, and I would like to recall some points where most speakers converged:

- We need to foster diversified and sustainable manufacturing capacities of health technologies to ensure equitable access. A lot was also dedicated to the importance of having clarity of objectives and trade-offs of these manufacturing initiatives; and
- Open and predictable trade rules are essential to enabling new market entrants and smooth global value chains of health technologies.

5. Another key takeaway from this discussion is the need for a holistic approach that integrates multiple perspectives to forge a comprehensive global response.

As Dr Farrar and other experts emphasized, diversifying manufacturing capabilities is pivotal. But such diversification will not yield the expected results, if we lack, other elements in that formula, such as:

- Streamlined and efficient customs procedures facilitating imports of active pharmaceutical ingredients;
- A balanced intellectual property regime that spurs innovation while safeguarding public health, as noted by experts on the third panel;
- Regulatory cooperation and mutual recognition of marketing approvals; and
- A business-friendly environment encouraging investment in health-related manufacturing facilities.

6. Another key insight from today's discussion is that the long-term success of regional manufacturing hinges not just on capacity, but also on other overlooked factors such as product mix, flexibility in production assets, and managerial talent. We also dedicated time to discussing how best to share information and how we can better coordinate the important areas of data, so those making decisions at the country or regional level will have a better picture of what is happening in the region and worldwide.

7. I was also very inspired by Dr Ngozi's message today. She came to this organization at a very difficult time, in the midst of the pandemic. And we forged such important partnerships, longstanding ones, such as the Trilateral one, let me thank the World Health Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization for their support of this Symposium today, and also for the work we did during those very difficult times. And other partnerships that we see here today with the private sector, with civil society, NGOs and foundations. I think those partnerships are in a good place for us to keep on working together to deliver on such an important challenge.

8. Thank you very much for spending the day with us and I hope that you will come renewed to these discussions as we continue our work.
