



MEDIA RELEASE

Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade Calls for Urgent Action Against Illegal Pharmaceuticals

Zurich, 18 June 2019 – Today, the Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) addressed the problem of illicit trade in pharmaceuticals at the Pharmaceuticals Anti-Counterfeiting Forum.

“Illicit pharmaceuticals and fake medical devices are a major threat to public health,” said TRACIT Director General Jeffrey Hardy. **“The danger extends beyond the generally well-known problem of fakes to include substandard, falsified, unregistered and unlicensed drugs as well as their theft, fraud, illicit diversion, smuggling and trafficking.”**

In his opening remarks, Mr. Hardy underscored the importance of recognizing that the problem of illicit pharmaceuticals applies not only to popular lifestyle drugs, such as erectile dysfunction and weight loss medicines, but also to lifesaving medicines including those used to treat malaria, cancer, heart disease and other serious illnesses. Moreover, the problem extends to fake medical devices – from contact lenses to condoms, syringes, surgical instruments, wheelchairs and radiotherapy machines.

“First and foremost, consumers are at risk when falsified and substandard pharmaceuticals have little or no medicinal value and result in therapeutic failure,” said Mr. Hardy. **“But on top of that, spending money on ineffective medicines is a waste of precious household income for many families.”**

Fake, substandard or falsified contraceptives also present a growing concern for women’s health and significantly undermine sustainable development goals to universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. **“Falsified contraceptives impact women’s health by limiting access to safe and reliable contraception and degrade the integrity of family planning programs designed to avoid unplanned pregnancies,”** said Mr. Hardy.

The Forum also addressed how the problem of illicit pharmaceuticals impairs the marketplace for genuine products, strains public health budgets and disincentivizes pharmaceutical innovation and investment in research and development of new drugs. Participants focused on threats to the pharmaceuticals supply chain and addressed opportunities for securitization and cooperation among stakeholders. They also discussed how criminals exploit the supply chain to trade in illicit pharmaceuticals and ways to meet the new trends and challenges faced in the pharmaceutical sector.

The Forum was co-hosted by IQPC and Pharma IQ with support from TRACIT and Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies (ASOP) EU. Participants included IGOs, brand owners, NGOs and industry associations.

About TRACIT – The Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade ([TRACIT](http://www.tracit.org/)) is an independent, private sector initiative to drive change to mitigate the economic and social damages of illicit trade by strengthening government enforcement mechanisms and mobilizing businesses across industry sectors most impacted by illicit trade.

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