

UNAIDS Statement on the Medicines Patent Pool

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Aurobindo Pharma and MedChem have become the first producers of generic antiretroviral medicines to join the Medicines Patent Pool. By joining the Pool, the two manufacturers are able to take advantage of the agreement signed between Gilead Sciences and the Medicines Patent Pool in July 2011. The July agreement made Gilead's intellectual property on four antiretroviral medicines available to the Patent Pool for licensing to generic manufacturers.

Through the new agreement, both pharmaceutical companies have signed up to produce emtricitabine, cobistat and elvitegravir and the combination pill called the 'Quad' which contains tenofovir, emtricitabine, cobistat, and elvitegravir. In addition, generics manufacturer MedChem has also chosen to produce tenofovir.

Aurobindo is already a major producer of generic antiretroviral medicines, and was previously manufacturing tenofovir under a separate voluntary license granted directly from Gilead Sciences which carried restrictions to distribute to several countries. Through a key provision in the Medicine Patent Pool's licenses, Aurobindo was able to end its previous agreement with Gilead. This will now allow Aurobindo to independently produce tenofovir, which is off patent in India and directly distribute it to a wider number of countries than the previous license had permitted. This should help to make tenofovir more widely available at a lower cost.

UNAIDS strongly encourages other antiretroviral patent holders to establish agreements with the Pool, and for generic manufacturers to utilize the licenses that the Pool can facilitate to expand access to antiretroviral treatment. Paul De Lay, UNAIDS Deputy Executive Director, Programme 'We congratulate the Medicines Patent Pool for completing this agreement with Aurobindo and Medchem,' said Paul De Lay, UNAIDS Deputy Executive

Director, Programme. 'UNAIDS strongly encourages other antiretroviral patent holders to establish agreements with the Pool, and for generic manufacturers to utilize the licenses that the Pool can facilitate to expand access to antiretroviral treatment.'

There are currently an estimated 6.6 million people receiving antiretroviral treatment in low- and middle-income countries around the world. However a further 9 million people who are eligible for treatment still do not have access.

The Medicines Patent Pool was established in 2010 with the support of UNITAID. It aims to increase access to newer antiretroviral medicines by creating a pool of patents and intelligence on antiretroviral production donated by medicine producers. It is currently in negotiations with a number of other patent holders and producers.

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