

Foreword by the Directors-General

International cooperation on public health is inherently multi-dimensional, with a focus on building effective health systems. It is dynamic and responsive to the demands of countries around the globe. Towards this goal, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have been working closely together for almost two decades to support global endeavours to improve health outcomes.

The first edition of this study in 2012 was intended to support international cooperation on health, IP and trade issues in a transparent and holistic manner. For this purpose, it draws together the three agencies' respective areas of expertise. The goal remains to provide a platform for sharing practical experience and understanding of a wide range of policy instruments. This is conceived as a means of supporting and informing ongoing technical cooperation and policy discussions, especially at a time when the world grapples with the multi-dimensional challenges of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have been encouraged by the strong, positive feedback signalling that the study has contributed to a more informed and inclusive policy debate. It highlights that the study has helped to progress a common resolve to work towards universal access to essential medical technologies and to strengthen and diversify innovation systems to respond to evolving demand.

The second edition of the study captures the insights from our further extensive policy dialogue and joint technical assistance activities. This includes a series of trilateral symposia on topical questions in which we, personally, had the benefit of participating and which reflects our common desire to build policy coherence in the public health area.

The revised study records the numerous significant developments that we have seen since 2013. These include efforts made towards achieving universal health

coverage, challenges posed by antimicrobial resistance, the changing disease burden and new global disease threats. The study reviews public and private sector innovation models, as well as the repercussions of an increasingly diverse medical technologies industry and the rise of innovative and production capacity in developing countries. It draws practical lessons from experiences regarding how public health, IP, trade and competition rules all interact with each other in the broader context of the human rights dimension of health and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). And it provides insights on measures to promote innovation and access to medical technologies, noting the growing network of free trade agreements and the importance that trade plays for access to medical technologies.

The study supports informed priority setting, resource allocation and policy decisions through an improved empirical foundation. It integrates more comprehensive and accessible data and information on prices, access, patents and licensing, as well as trade. The insert at the beginning of the study summarizes issues that have come up in the context of COVID-19 and guides the reader to relevant parts of the study where those issues are addressed.

We trust that this updated resource will remain a reliable platform for future policy debate and analysis and will provide helpful guidance for those who seek up-to-date answers to challenging questions. We pledge continuing commitment for further collaboration among our three agencies, together with our partners whose insights have contributed much to the study. This will support our work towards the shared objectives of universal health coverage, better health outcomes for all, fulfilment of the SDGs and, first and foremost, the design of effective and lasting responses to public health crises. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought extraordinary challenges to peoples' health, economies and societies at large. Global collaborative efforts are required now more than ever before.

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