



Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative*

72nd World Health Assembly

DNDi intervention on Agenda Item 11.4: **Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals**

Progress towards achieving the SDGs -- including, ending the preventable deaths children under 5, and the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, neglected tropical diseases and hepatitis -- can only be achieved with sustained political will, safe effective health tools and sustainable financing.

For example, while there are new treatments called Direct Acting Antivirals (DAAs) that can actually cure Hepatitis C patients and eliminate the disease globally, the challenge is immense. Fewer than 10% of those requiring life-saving treatment for Hepatitis C are receiving it, with around 6 million treated out of the estimated 71 million affected. Tracing and treating those who inject drugs, a particularly vulnerable group is critical.

A real challenge is to build upon the effectiveness of existing tools to find and treat the millions of asymptomatic patients that contribute to a growing epidemic. DNDi launched its hepatitis C programme in 2016 at a time when DAAs cost tens of thousands of dollars per treatment course and represented a clear deterrent to actively searching for HCV-infected people. DAAs previously priced out of reach of most patients and health systems, are now available at certified quality for less than USD 100 per treatment course. However, affordable DAA prices are only available in countries with dynamic generic competition and public leadership.

Accessing DAAs at affordable prices is facilitated by using the full range of options available to governments, including competitive tendering and flexibilities available under the TRIPS Agreement, as Egypt, Malaysia, and Kazakhstan have shown. Reducing the burden placed on health systems by medicines prices allows for additional gains towards the SDGs, including ending catastrophic expenditures, reducing poverty and increasing equality.