

Delegation from
The Student World Assembly (NGO)

Represented by
LaGuardia Community College

Position Paper for the World Health Organization (WHO)

The Student World Assembly (SWA) is dedicated to promoting education, awareness, and democracy by addressing issues of global concern within communities. The SWA motto of “Educate, Participate, Take Action” commits it to motivating students into international social mobilization that can target all local and global issues of concern. It fully supports the WHO Constitution and the UN Millennium Development Goals, and those efforts by all international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and nations toward developing global health. The SWA fully acknowledges the importance of the issues at hand, and the urgency required for action to improve current conditions pertaining especially to the polio epidemic and the HIV/AIDS crisis. The SWA has responded to the emergency of the HIV/AIDS crisis by selecting it as the overarching theme for its 2005 International Convention in Montreal.

I. Economics of Scale: The Problems of Polio Eradication

There are six countries that endure the polio endemic: Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Niger, Afghanistan, and Egypt. Unfortunately, polio has also reemerged in Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d’Ivoire and the Sudan. Aware of these prominent re-infections where previously interrupted, the SWA fully supports the 2004 Geneva Declaration on the Eradication of Poliomyelitis by the Ministers of Health of the six polio-endemic countries and the global partners in its “final push against the disease.” The Geneva Declaration is a reiteration of resolutions WHA41.28 (1988) and WHA52.22 (1999) in its goal of the eradication of polio.

The SWA acknowledges and fully supports the efforts of the G8 leaders in renewing their pledge to finance eradication efforts. The SWA calls upon all nations able to increase their support and funding to help in the polio eradication effort, to prevent a revival of polio transmission. It recognizes the importance of poliovirus vaccinations for all individuals, and urges the WHO to support advancements in this area.

II. The Role of Generic Pharmaceuticals in Society

The SWA recognizes the vital role that the pharmaceutical industry plays in maintaining global health, but advocates establishing a global public forum to coordinate efforts to abrogate pharmaceutical-built barriers that are very selective about medicine sale and distribution. These barriers serve as major impediments to fragile countries purchasing pharmaceutical drugs for its impoverished people.

The SWA supports Resolution 2004/26 of the Commission on Human Rights, which calls upon states to pursue policies which would promote the availability of products and technologies used to treat pandemics, including HIV/AIDS and ‘refrain from taking measures which would deny or limit equal access for all persons’ to such

treatments. It fully supports channeling generic pharmaceuticals to less developed countries through the World Health Organization. European Union estimates that if this is implemented, over 10.5 million lives a year could be saved by 2015 as well as boosting economic growth and social development.

The SWA encourages states to become members of the WTO, thus adopting the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Rights (TRIPS). These have a positive impact on the efficacy of public health sectors, particularly in ensuring the availability of pharmaceutical drugs. The SWA recognizes that the provisions of Articles 8, 30 and 31 of the TRIPS agreement have opened the way to better access to these products by developing countries, particularly after the 2003 agreement by WTO member states which further removed obstacles to LDCs. It urges further work to limit administrative constraints, thereby enabling faster and more equitable treatment access.

The SWA deplors unethical measures used by some pharmaceutical companies to gain exorbitant profits. At the same time, however, it understands that research and development (R&D) incentives are needed to generate vaccines for developing countries. The SWA supports the use of Advance Purchasing Contracts (APCs) that offer incentives for LDCs to generate R&D for neglected vaccines. It believes this will provide IP protection through back loading, which will guarantee future rewards for R&D, thus spearheading production of new drugs and vaccines.

III. Resource Allocation for HIV/AIDS: Prevention versus Treatment

The SWA recognizes the HIV/AIDS crisis as a global pandemic. It also realizes the importance and urgency of getting vital medications to the infected, and stopping the overwhelming spread of the disease. It therefore realizes the importance of resources being allocated to both branches of the fight to eradicate this disease. It sees treatment as of immediate short-term importance, but recognizes that long-term prevention requires education measures.

The SWA is firmly committed to the UN Millennium Development Goals which seek to mitigate obstacles to LDCs achieving guaranteed affordability of Anti-Retroviral (ARV) drugs. It also supports revamping health system infrastructures and logistics procedures in the public and private sector toward efficient ARVs distribution. This will enable more responsive and effective treatment measures.

The SWA believes education about HIV/AIDS is important to combat the spread of the disease. It has made a priority of education and discussion about HIV/AIDS, particularly by giving members in affected areas a chance to pass on their first-hand knowledge of this disease through its discussion boards and forums. A priority has also been made of adopting policies that can combat the disease's spread and treat those infected. The SWA feels that that through this "Educate, Participate, Take Action" strategy, it can make a difference in fighting this global health threat in the longer term.