Message delivered by Dr. Kenneth Hartigan Go on behalf of Department of Health Secretary Enrique T. Ona

Good morning.

Ted Padilla  
Tomas Weigold  
Dr. Julie Hall  
Ms. Tamara Music  
Reiner Gloor  
Sabrina Chan  
Guests and Participants. Industry and health institution partners.

Integrity Initiative  
Philippine Academy of Physicians  
Philippine Federation of Private Medical Practitioners  
PCP  
CHAT  
PCPI  
META  
UP College of Medicine  
Ateneo Medical School

Access to Medicines is one of the six critical building blocks for health systems strengthening. There are challenging issues on this front that puts many stakeholders in profound quandry.

The pharmaceutical landscape is constantly evolving and changing and admittedly indeed quite complex. There are many players with divergent interests and agenda. The Department of Health recognizes these and hope that
it can play the role of a wise counsel. Come to think about this, the DOH can have many avenues to respond to this challenge.

By enforcing regulatory powers
Standard setting
Health Directives
establishing Medicine Policy
Large network of government institutions procuring & using these products
Leveraging with health insurance

While we acknowledge that there must be a good sensible balance between health and trade, achieving this is most difficult. It is part of our task to even out the playing field, constantly reminding ourselves that patients come first and their health interest and welfare is utmost in our consideration.

But if better or equitable access to medicines is to be achieved, we should also look into the rest of the building blocks.

Governance and regulations - provide assurance of quality medicines and health products is one such agenda.

Human resources for health - the doctors, the medical professional societies
Clinical service delivery - this pertains to practice of health care, is this equitable?
Health financing - the need to demand and the willingness to spend money for good financial investments with the end in view for driving the much needed health systems strengthening.

One of the missing elements is ethics. It is often assumed to be there. But this is not always tacit. A set of rules therefore is needed and has to govern us in our behaviors. At the end of the day, ethics cannot be regulated, but the behaviors of ethics can be monitored and managed. The Mexico Principles were not just set for industry and health professionals, it covers also government sector.

I sincerely hope that today's event will lead to better understanding of human behavior and market activities, and while we do talk about pharmaceutical affairs, I suspect this topic is intended to cover other aspects of unethical business practices.

Please inform us at DOH on how we can make a better impact to achieve a common and better health outcome. On behalf of health secretary Enrique Ona, thank you.