



STATEMENT

WHO Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) intersessional briefing on the “Predictable global supply chain and logistics network”

17 MARCH 2023 – Article 6 proposes to establish a “WHO Global Pandemic Supply Chain and Logistics Network” and gives WHO significant oversight to control global production of pandemic products, going significantly beyond the organization’s mandate and competency.

Any mechanism to strengthen global supply chain should build on the expertise and capabilities of the private sector and the relevant institutions, in this case the WTO, as they are usually the ones responsible for building supply chains and ensuring that they are sustainable over the long term.

This WHO-centric model cannot replace market-based solutions. It runs the risk of having inefficient allocation of resources with potential duplication or replacement of current capacity, fracturing efficient systems and creating market distortions. Furthermore, it may not be flexible enough to be able to adapt in the event of surges in demand and can create a risk of shortages.

Governments and private sector need to work together to strengthen existing national, regional, and global systems and set out procedures for allocation, distribution, logistical operations, customs clearance, and storage facilities to help deploy medical products and ensure access.

For this to take place, governments should commit to open trade without restrictions and expedited processes for import and export during a pandemic, including “green lanes” for health products, personnel, and the inputs necessary for their production. These issues fall within the purview of the WTO. The WTO and its Member States have undertaken significant work on these issues and as such the issue of supply chain and logistics should be dealt by the relevant institution.