

**Intervention on provisional agenda item 12.2 - Global vaccine action plan
SIXTY-SEVENTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY**

Speaker: Ms Zuzana Kusynová, from the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP)

Honourable Members of the WHA,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the International Pharmaceutical Federation, the global organisation representing over three million pharmacists worldwide. We welcome the global strategy to ensure the eradication of vaccine-preventable diseases, and to reduce mortality and morbidity from them.

We applaud the secretariat for this action plan.

In the *Joint WHO-FIP Guidelines on Good Pharmacy Practice*¹ FIP and WHO emphasised that pharmacists should be used to their full potential in educating about safety and relevance of immunisation, and facilitating or providing vaccination.

Confidence in the safety of vaccines will be supported by proper vaccine vigilance, but also by secure supply chain management. Indeed, the integrity of the supply chain is a critical element as highlighted by unfortunate events such as when around 60,000 people were inoculated with counterfeit vaccines during a vaccination campaign against meningitis in Niger in 1995.²

Not only vaccines need to be safe and available, but they must be acceptable and administered to patients. There is growing evidence that pharmacists improve the coverage in target groups that other healthcare professionals find difficult to reach. For example, influenza vaccination campaigns in pharmacies in Ireland specifically target patients who are “at risk” (81%), patients with a chronic illness, difficult to reach patients (28% had never received a flu vaccine before).³

FIP took part in the Workshop on Enhancing Communication around Influenza Vaccination (WEECIV) CDC, jointly organised by the World Health Organization and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta in June. Pharmacists’ contribution in communication strategies was highlighted as a way to address the challenges of vaccination hesitancy and resistance.

Thank you for your attention.

(273 words)

¹ FIP/WHO Joint Guidelines on Good Pharmacy Practice - Standards for Quality Services (2011, Hyderabad). Available at : http://fip.org/www/index.php?page=good_pharmacy_practice

² In response to a meningitis epidemic in Niger from February to May 1995 (41, 000 cases reported), the Niger authorities organized an extensive vaccination campaign. In March 1995, Niger received a donation of 88,000 Pasteur Mérieux and SmithKline Beecham vaccines from neighboring Nigeria. A Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) team working with local health authorities noticed that the vaccines from Nigeria had an unusual appearance and inquiries were made. Pasteur Mérieux laboratories confirmed that the batch numbers and the expiration dates did not correspond to their manufacturing records. The drugs supplied by these companies had been substituted with counterfeit drugs. Tests carried out found no traces of active product, which confirmed that they were false. Bottles and labels were, however, copied to perfection. According to estimates, around 60,000 persons were inoculated with false vaccines out of a total 5 million vaccinated during the campaign. Read more at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pharma_fraud

³ <http://ipu.ie/latest-press-releases/1756-pharmacists-to-offer-flu-vaccines-to-patients.html>