

**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS - GENEVA**

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In reply, please mention:

18 April 2025

Expert Committee on the Selection and
Use of Essential Medicines
World Health Organization
20 Avenue Appia 1211 Geneva, Switzerland,

Ref: A.25 Sunscreen, broad-spectrum – prevention of skin cancer in people with albinism.”

The United Republic of Tanzania wishes to reaffirm its unwavering commitment to the promotion and protection of the right to health for all individuals, without discrimination, in accordance with its obligations under international human rights law and global public health frameworks.

In this regard, Tanzania strongly supports the proposal for the inclusion of sunscreen lotion in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines, with particular consideration for the urgent and unmet health needs of persons with albinism, especially in developing countries.

Persons with albinism face heightened and life-threatening exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation, leading to an alarming prevalence of preventable skin cancers, especially in equatorial regions. In Tanzania and across much of sub-Saharan Africa, skin cancer remains a leading cause of premature mortality among persons with albinism—often claiming lives in early adulthood.

It is in this context that sunscreen must be recognized not as a cosmetic product, but as an essential, life-saving medical intervention. Its availability and accessibility are not a matter of luxury but of survival and dignity.

We recall that the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is enshrined in Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and affirmed in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Furthermore, the right to life, protected under Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), imposes a positive obligation on States to take measures to safeguard life, particularly where preventable causes of death are known and remedies are available.

Inclusion of sunscreen in the WHO Essential Medicines List would:

- Provide normative guidance for national health systems to procure and distribute sunscreen as a public good;

- Enhance equity in access to preventive healthcare, particularly for marginalized populations;
- Support implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, notably Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Tanzania calls upon the World Health Organization and its Member States to take this critical step forward, and to affirm the right to health and life for persons with albinism, by recognizing sunscreen as an essential medicine. Such a decision would reflect our shared commitment to health equity, dignity, and the principle of leaving no one behind.



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