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Support for the Inclusion of Application A-30 Urea- and Glycerol-Based Topical Moisturizers for Atopic Dermatitis on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines

Dear Members of the 25th WHO Expert Committee,

On behalf of the African Society of Dermatology and Venereology (ASDV), I am writing to express our strong support for the inclusion of Application A-30, concerning urea- and glycerol-based topical moisturizers, on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines (EML) for the treatment of atopic dermatitis (AD).

Atopic dermatitis represents a significant burden on public health globally, affecting up to 15% of children and 8% of adults. In underserved regions across Africa and beyond, the impact is particularly important.

International guidelines across the board consistently identify anti-inflammatory therapies alongside diligent and consistent skin care as the cornerstone of first-line AD treatment. However, a critical barrier exists in the widespread lack of access to high-quality emollients. In many countries, this is due to a combination of poor availability, inadequate storage capacity, and prohibitively high costs. Alarming, the expense of these essential products can often consume as much as 30% of a family's monthly income, placing an unbearable financial strain on vulnerable populations.

Therefore, the African Society of Dermatology and Venereology strongly advocates for the inclusion of affordable and effective emollients – specifically creams containing 5% urea or 15–20% glycerol – in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines. These formulations are not only clinically effective and well-supported by robust scientific evidence, but they also represent a cost-effective solution that can significantly improve the lives of millions while potentially reducing overall healthcare expenditures associated with AD management.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical application. We are confident that the inclusion of these essential emollients on the WHO Model List will have a profound and positive impact on the lives of countless individuals affected by atopic dermatitis.

Sincerely,

Dr Moez Ben Salem, President of the ASDV

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