

The Forty-sixth World Health Assembly,

Recalling resolution [WHA31.32](#) on the importance of using nonproprietary names in establishing national drug formularies;

Acknowledging with satisfaction the increasing contribution of generic products to national drug markets in both developed and developing countries;

Noting the current trend to market products with the same active ingredient as, and intended to be clinically interchangeable with, a product currently on the market (multisource products) under trade-marks or brand names derived from stems or other descriptors used in international nonproprietary names;

Recognizing that such a practice, particularly in respect of single-ingredient prescription drugs, may compromise the safety of patients by creating confusion in prescribing and dispensing medicines and by interfering with the orderly development of the nomenclature for international nonproprietary names;

Aware of the concern expressed by the Sixth International Conference of Drug Regulatory Authorities (1991) about the increasing use of pharmaceutical brand names that are very similar to or derived from international nonproprietary names;

Noting the recommendation made by the WHO Expert Committee on the Use of Essential Drugs, in its fifth report¹, on the need to discourage, as a matter of urgency, the use of trade-marks that are derived from international nonproprietary names,

1. REQUESTS Member States:

- (1) to enact rules or regulations, as necessary, to ensure that international nonproprietary names (or the equivalent nationally approved generic names) used in the labelling and advertising of pharmaceutical products are always displayed prominently;
- (2) to encourage manufacturers to rely on their corporate name and the international nonproprietary names, rather than on trade-marks, to promote and market multisource products introduced after the expiry of a patent;
- (3) to develop policy guidelines on the use and protection of international nonproprietary names, and to discourage the use of names derived from them, and particularly names including established stems, as trade-marks;

2. CALLS ON the Director-General to intensify his consultations with governments and representatives of the pharmaceutical industry on ways of reducing to a minimum the problems arising from drug nomenclatures that may create confusion and jeopardize the safety of patients.

Twelfth Plenary Meeting, 12 May 1993
A46/VR/12

¹ WHO Technical Report Series, No. 825, 1992