

Remarks by Pauline Latham OBE MP, at reception on substandard and falsified medicines

27th March 2018, London

- Check Against Delivery

1. Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen
2. It is great to see so many of you here in London today, right across Parliament Square - Thank you all for coming and I'd like to express my appreciation to our hosts Professor Ashish Jha from the Harvard Global Health Institute and David Richmond from the Brazzaville Foundation for organising this reception and for Sovereign Sustainability and Development for co-sponsoring this exclusive gathering.
3. I am honored to be speaking in front of such a distinguished group of experts today, who over the course of the conference tomorrow, will be discussing and

identifying key challenges of how to, ultimately, eliminate the proliferation of falsified and substandard medicines around the world. This is an issue that critically affects the least developed countries, such as those in Africa; and the most vulnerable groups in society - including, our CHILDREN.

4. As a member of the International Development Select Committee in the UK House of Commons, these topics are close to my heart.
5. As the third largest contributor to the WHO, averaging £100m per annum, I am proud that my government is fully committed to delivering the Sustainable Development Goals, especially under SDG3 *“Ensuring healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.”*
6. Political crises, socio-economic development, access to the most basic resources, institutional capacity and bureaucratic hurdles, alongside many other factors, are the breeding causes for the rise of the most dangerous public health killers - HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria.

7. But as to date, we do not really know how many of these deaths result from the use of substandard or falsified medicines. And especially how many of our future generation - our children are affected by these.

8. What we know is that according to WHO estimates from 2013, more than 120,000 African children had lost their lives due to fake anti-malarials and other medication. However, surprisingly, the issue of substandard medicines not only afflicts children and adults in least developed economies, but also those living in high-income countries.

9. The shocking increase in substandard and falsified medicines, has also contributed to the increase in antimicrobial resistances (AMR) which makes dangerous infections, such as malaria, much harder to treat. If we allow this to go unchecked, the results will be catastrophic for global well-being and prosperity. It is estimated that by 2050, drug resistant infections will put 10 million lives a year at risk and diminish global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2% to 3.5%.

10. Through Lord O’Neil’s efforts in leading the Independent Review on AMR, the UK has played a crucial role in catalyzing global action. This is certainly significant progress- BUT we can do more!

11. The UK and the Department for International Development have built strong relationships with partners across Africa in order to strengthen WHO capabilities in Africa. DIFID is supporting the Regional Office for Africa (WHO AFRO) in its efforts to build countries’ capacities against deadly diseases. This was mandated by the UK government’s performance agreement with the WHO to assist them in building relationships with partners across Africa. I am glad to see WHO representatives in the audience for this very important discussion here today. It is our duty as politicians, officials, experts and private sector representatives to closely work with our international partners, forging a consensus on how to tackle the great health challenges of our time and focusing on results-oriented actions that produce a real impact on the ground.

12. Distinguished guests, we live in a time where we all carry the responsibility to apply the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and do our best to achieve these goals under Agenda 2030. - Only together, however, we will be able to work for a common future that leaves no one behind.

13. Only together, by creating “inclusive partnerships” under SDG17 can we build bridges between governments, the private sector and civil society and convey our messages to the highest political echelons to make sure that deadly public health crises, such as the combat against falsified medicines, receive the attention they deserve!

14. And this can only be achieved with the thought leadership of all present today!

15. Ladies and Gentlemen, on this note, I would like to thank you for your attention.

16. Please let me finish by wishing you a successful conference for tomorrow and urge you to use this reception tonight as an opportunity to develop

relationships and learn more about organisations such as our hosts, the Harvard Global Health Institute and the Brazzaville Foundation and what they are doing in this field. - Thank You!

Sources for the Speaker:

- Lord O'Neill Report on AMR: https://amr-review.org/sites/default/files/AMR%20Review%20Paper%20%20Tackling%20a%20crisis%20for%20the%20health%20and%20wealth%20of%20nations_1.pdf
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/587155/Performance-Agreement-UK-WHO-27Jan2017.pdf
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-37470667>