Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly
Side Event

Addressing the Global Challenge of Medication Safety
to Improve Patient Safety and Quality of Care

Wednesday 25 May 2016
12:15 to 13:45
Room XXIII (23)

Lead Member State: Poland
Co-sponsors: Malaysia, Oman and Sri Lanka

Background
Unsafe medication practices and medication errors are a leading cause of patient safety incidents in countries across the world. In the United States alone, it is estimated that as many as 1.5 million patients are harmed and hundreds of thousands are killed every year as a result of medication safety issue.¹ The incidence is similar in Europe.² Statistics in low- and middle-income countries are limited and vary widely, indicating that the true burden of unsafe medication practices is grossly underestimated. Worldwide, the cost associated with medication errors has been estimated at US$42 billion annually.³ This is almost 1% of total global health expenditure. Recognizing that unsafe medication practices and medication errors have significant global health impact and economic repercussions, the World Health Organization (WHO) has identified Medication Safety as the Global Patient Safety Challenge to galvanize global commitment to improve medication safety and define a set of actions that are simple, practical and can be universally applied across all countries and settings. The “Challenge” will be to reduce medication-related harm by 50% globally in the next five years, with a proposed option for adaptable targets at country level.

In the run-up to the launch of the WHO Global Patient Safety Challenge later in 2016, this side event on “Addressing the global challenge of medication safety to improve patient safety and quality of care” brings together country leaders, policy makers and experts from WHO Member States, representatives from patients’ networks and non-governmental organizations, and other key stakeholders to review the global problem of avoidable patient harm caused by medication use.

Objectives
1. To review the problem of unsafe medication practices and existing challenges to medication safety.
2. To discuss key strategies for the safety of medication practices, and reduction of medication errors and medication-associated harm to improve patient safety and quality of care.
3. To introduce the WHO Global Patient Safety Challenge on Medication Safety for high-level advocacy, and to call for concerted global and country actions on medication safety.

Chairs
H.E. Piotr Stachańczyk, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Poland to the UN Office in Geneva
Sir Liam Donaldson, WHO Patient Safety Envoy
## Agenda

### 12:15-12:20 Welcome and opening remarks

- H.E. Piotr Stachańczyk, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Poland to the UN Office in Geneva
- H.E. Dr Ahmed Bin Mohammed Bin Obaid Al-Saidi, Minister of Health, Oman

### 12:20-12:30 Understanding the problem of medication safety & WHO Patient Safety Global Initiative

Scale and scope of the problem of medication safety, and introduction of the WHO Global Patient Safety Challenge on Medication Safety: Sir Liam Donaldson, WHO Patient Safety Envoy

### 12:30-12:50 Country experiences in reducing avoidable harm due to unsafe medication practices and medication errors

- Poland - Dr Barbara Kutryba, National Center for Quality Assessment in Healthcare
- Malaysia - Dr Nor'Aishah Abu Bakar, Head, Patient Safety Unit, Ministry of Health
- Oman - Mr Ahmed Alharbi, Director, Drug Control, Ministry of Health
- Sri Lanka - Dr Sathasivam Sridharan, Director, Healthcare Quality & Safety, Ministry of Health

### 12:50-13:00 The patients’ involvement in reducing medication related harm

The role of patients in avoiding medication associated harm: Ms Maryann Murray, Patients’ for Patient Safety, Canada

### 13:00-13:40 Moderated discussion, questions and comments

Moderator: Sir Liam Donaldson, WHO Patient Safety Envoy

### 13:40-13:45 Conclusion

Summary: H.E. Piotr Stachańczyk, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Poland to the UN Office in Geneva

Closing remarks: Sir Liam Donaldson, WHO Patient Safety Envoy

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For further information, please contact

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