United Nations logo **United Nations Human Rights Council**

**United Nations High Commissioner**

**for Human Rights**

**Easy to read**

**Making sure that everyone gets their right to health by having the medicines, vaccines and other health things they need**

A cartoon of a person pointing

Description automatically generated

A group of pills and bottles

Description automatically generated

# A picture containing logo Description automatically generatedAbout this report

We are called the **United Nations** **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**.

Or **OHCHR** for short.

A group of people looking at a computer screen

Description automatically generated with low confidence

We are part of the **United Nations** (UN).

The United Nations is a group of countries that works together to make the world better and safer.

A group of people standing together

Description automatically generated

Our work is about making sure that everyone gets their **human rights**.

A cartoon of a person pointing

Description automatically generated

Human rights are about what should happen in all our lives.

For example, we all have the right to have the best health we can.

That means everyone in the world should be able to have the best health they can. That includes the best mental health.

**A hand holding a pen and writing on a checklist

Description automatically generated**This report is about some problems that can stop people from getting their right to health.

A cartoon of a person with eyes closed

Description automatically generatedThis report is also about some things that countries should do to change that.

There are problems because many people are not getting the medicines, vaccines and other health things they need.

A cartoon of a person getting injection

Description automatically generated

Vaccines can help to stop people getting some illnesses.

People get vaccines from a doctor or nurse.

A stethoscope and thermometer

Description automatically generated

Other health things might be things like:

* Medical tests to help people find out about their health.
* A black and grey wheelchair

  Description automatically generated with medium confidenceMachines or equipment to help people to look after their health or to keep safe.
* Things that people might need to move around or to communicate.

Like wheelchairs or hearing aids.

A person sitting at a table with two people

Description automatically generatedMany countries, organizations and people gave us their ideas for this report.

For example, we had a meeting about the ideas in this report on 16 February 2024.

A cartoon of a person with grey hair

Description automatically generated

**Some problems that can stop people from getting their right to health**

Many people in the world cannot get the medicines, vaccines or other health things they need.

A cartoon of a person talking on the phone

Description automatically generatedThere are many reasons for that.

For example, more people have health problems that last a long time. Like cancer and diabetes.

This is making it harder for people and health services to cope.

A hand holding a wallet and a money in it

Description automatically generatedFor example, many people in poorer countries have to pay the whole cost of their medicines or health things.

That means many people cannot afford good medicines or other health things they need.

A tree and a puddle of water

Description automatically generated

It can be even harder for people to get the right medicines and vaccines when there are big problems in the country.

Like war, bad storms or too much heat.

A broken ground with buildings in it

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

For example, hospitals and other health places may be damaged.

And it can be harder to get medicines and vaccines to some places.

A person in a lab coat pouring liquid into a beaker

Description automatically generated

Countries should also be making sure that medicines and vaccines are good and safe.

A cartoon of a person holding his hands up

Description automatically generatedBut many poorer countries have problems checking new medicines and vaccines.

For example, they may not have enough money, training or staff.

A cartoon of a person sitting on a chair

Description automatically generated

This means it can take longer for people in some countries to get new medicines.

A two cups of pills and a pile of pills

Description automatically generated

And it means that other medicines may be used instead.

Like medicines that are less safe or good.

A stack of coins and money

Description automatically generated

Most companies only make new medicines if they think they will get enough money for them.

A group of pills and bottles

Description automatically generated

This means there are not enough medicines, vaccines or health tests for some health problems.

A hand holding a pen and writing on a checklist

Description automatically generatedThere are also some unfair rules in the world about making and selling medicines.

A stack of coins and money

Description automatically generated

For example, companies can often charge more for new medicines and vaccines.

A person with finger on his mouth

Description automatically generated

Companies often do not share information about new medicines they make.

This can stop other companies from having new ideas or making more medicines.

A cartoon of hands giving money to another hand

Description automatically generated

This means there may be less medicines for people.

And the medicines may cost more.

A group of men in military uniforms and a weapon

Description automatically generated

Things are often worse for people in poorer countries.

And countries where there is war or other problems.

A person in a wheelchair with a family

Description automatically generatedAnd the problems are often worse for some groups of people, like:

* Children.
* Women and girls.
* A tree with green leaves

  Description automatically generatedOlder people.
* People with disabilities.
* People with a health condition called albinism.
* People who go to another country to find work.
* People who live in the countryside.

A cartoon of a person with her hands up and a question mark

Description automatically generated**Some problems for children**

Children get many of the same health problems that adults do.

But many medicines and health tests have not been checked to make sure they work well for children.

A cartoon of a person getting injection

Description automatically generated

Many children have never had the important vaccines they need to keep well.

That means they could get some serious illnesses.

**Some problems for women and girls**

A person and person talking to each other

Description automatically generated

People often stop women and girls from choosing what they want to do with their health and their bodies.

For example, some women cannot get their own healthcare.

A cartoon of a person in a white shirt

Description automatically generated

They have to ask a man first.

Many health companies do not think about what women and girls need when they make medicines or treatments.

A cartoon of a pregnant person

Description automatically generated

And many women and girls do not get the healthcare or things they need to do with:

* Having periods.
* Safe sex and choosing if they want children or not.
* Being pregnant or having a baby.

This can put many women and girls in danger.

**Some problems for older people and people with disabilities**

A cartoon of a person with crutches

Description automatically generated

Many people with disabilities and older people may find it harder to move around.

But health places are often too far away from where they live.

And there may not be good transport to get there.

A cartoon of a person lying in bed with a thermometer in her mouth

Description automatically generated

Many older people and people with disabilities have been in danger from a big illness in the world called Covid-19.

A cartoon of a person with grey hair

Description automatically generated

But many older people and people with disabilities did not get vaccines or treatments for Covid-19.

A cartoon of a person touching his face

Description automatically generated

This may be because of unfair ideas that people may have.

For example, some people may think that older people and people with disabilities are less important than other people.

**Some main things that countries should do**

# A group of people standing together Description automatically generated

# Countries must make sure that everyone gets their right to health.

# Companies that make medicines must also make sure that people get their right to health.

A person in a judge's gown pointing at a piece of paper

Description automatically generated

There are important laws in the world about that.

Below are some main things that countries should work on straight away:

A person in a wheelchair with a family

Description automatically generated

Countries should make sure that people always get the important medicines, vaccines and other health things they need.

That includes groups of people who often do not get what they need now.

A stack of coins and money

Description automatically generatedThe medicines and vaccines should be good and safe.

And they should not cost too much.

A group of people sitting in chairs

Description automatically generated

Many people should work together to make sure that everyone gets the medicines, vaccines and health things they need.

That includes:

* Different countries.
* Companies that make medicines.
* Healthcare organizations and other organizations around the world.
* People in local communities.
* People who need medicines, vaccines and health things to keep well.

A drawing of a pie chart and a diagram

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

This should help countries and people to get better information about medicines and vaccines.

A stack of coins and money

Description automatically generated

For example, information about how much new medicines and vaccines cost.

This will help to get more medicines and vaccines that people can afford.

A person holding a clipboard

Description automatically generatedPoorer countries should find better ways to check if medicines are good and safe.

A group of pills and bottles

Description automatically generatedThey should get support to do that.

This will help people to get good medicines and vaccines more quickly.

A person wearing goggles and holding a glass of liquid

Description automatically generated

Countries should have enough money and staff to make new medicines and vaccines.

A group of people standing together

Description automatically generated

That means making medicines and vaccines for more health problems that people have.

Not just health problems that will make companies more money.

A group of people sitting at a table

Description automatically generated

Governments and companies can work together to get new medicines and vaccines.

This can help to get more money and ideas for new medicines and vaccines.

A blue and pink bottle

Description automatically generatedA close-up of a pill

Description automatically generatedA black and blue lined paper

Description automatically generatedThe rules about how to buy and sell medicines should work in a better way for people and their human rights.

A stack of coins and money

Description automatically generated

For example, the rules say that countries can get some medicines or vaccines made at a cheaper price.

Countries can do this without the company that made the medicines saying yes first.

A group of people sitting in chairs

Description automatically generated

It should be easier for countries to do things like this.

This will help everyone to get their right to health.

**For more information**

**A computer with a blue screen

Description automatically generated**

We also wrote a report about some good ways to make sure that everyone gets the medicines, vaccines and other health things they need.

The report is on our website at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/Easy-to-read-AHRC5350_0.docx>

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