



NEWS

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PIJIP, UNDP, and OSI Facilitate Meeting of Eastern European/Central Asian Government Officials and Civil Society to Address Intellectual Property and Access to Medicines

Participants issue resolution urging stakeholders to address the dangers that intellectual property provisions in trade agreements will limit access to essential health products

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Contact: Sean Flynn, Associate Director
Program on Information Justice and Intellectual Property
American University Washington College of Law
202-274-4157, or sflynn@wcl.american.edu

Kiev, Ukraine: The UN Development Program, the Open Society Institute, and American University's Program on Information Justice and Intellectual Property (PIJIP) convened a meeting of approximately 50 government officials and civil society representatives in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Participants were drawn from nations undertaking or seriously considering Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with western nations, or acceding to the World Trade Organization (WTO). Academics and health campaigners described flexibilities permitted under the WTO's intellectual property rules can be utilized to increase access to affordable generics. However, they warned that intellectual property provisions in past trade agreements and WTO accession terms have limited access to essential medicines.

At the meeting's conclusion, the participants issued a resolution calling on governments, legislators, civil society, aid organizations, universities and research organizations to recognize that trade agreements can raise prices and block access to medicines, and to take steps in the future protect access to medicines from overreaching trade policy.

The statement is available at <http://wcl.american.edu/pijip/go/resolution09222009>

PIJIP, the UN Development Program, and the Open Society Institute work together to provide technical assistance to advocates and governments to promote access to affordable medicines through intellectual property flexibilities permitted by the World Trade Organization agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS). Previous work has included the teaching of short courses on IP, Human Rights and Access to Medicines to LLM students and practitioners at

the Universities of Pretoria and Kwazulu Natal in South Africa and to parliamentarians from fourteen Southern African Countries with the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum.

For more information on PIJIP's Access to Medicines Legal Training Initiative, see <http://wcl.american.edu/pijip/go/humanrights>

The Program on Information Justice and Intellectual Property (PIJIP) at the Washington College of Law promotes public interest approaches to domestic and international intellectual property law through advocacy, events and the provision of legal and consulting services. PIJIP's activities focus on a balanced approach to intellectual property and other legal regimes that reward creators while ensuring broad public access to information and its products.