Announcement

South Africa-WHO gears up to map way forward to fight substandard and falsified medical products

Pretoria – The leading agencies, the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) and the National Department of Health (NDoH) with identified key stakeholders for the National Action Plan (NAP) are in a three-day workshop this week (4-6 February 2025) to pilot the World Health Organization (WHO) Draft Handbook for National Action Planning for Prevention, Detection and Response Strategies on Substandard and Falsified Medical Products (SFMPs). Stakeholders that are involved in eradicating SF medical products and ensuring that medical products entering the national supply are of a high quality, safe to use and work as intended will come together to develop strategies for combating SF medical products.

The list of stakeholders includes the highest level of government and policymakers, relevant national and local government departments, law enforcement, customs and the Judiciary, and all key participants within the supply chain engaged in the manufacture, procurement, importation, distribution, supply and dispensing of medical products. In addition, procurers of medical products, health providers, patients and customer representatives will be present.

A consultative process and collaboration among stakeholders are necessary to prioritise activities according to risk, mobilise resources, and effectively implement activities in fighting SFMPs to achieve a stable, integrated, and well-functioning regulatory system for medical products in the country.

A significant percentage of SF products circulating globally are found in Africa and this presents a serious concern for public health affecting the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 3, which aims to have universal health access for all. A common finding from the WHO Global Benchmarking Tool assessments is the need for strengthening the market surveillance and control function which fights the SFMPs. The 10th African Medicines Regulatory Conference (AMRC),

therefore, took stock of the current global, continental, and national frameworks, good practices and challenges in fighting SFMPs and provide concrete technical guidance to member state National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) and African Medicines Agency (AMA) and called on strengthened partners' support in fighting the scourge.

This pilot programme is year-long journey working together with key stakeholders of the NAP to develop and implement strategies for preventing, detecting and responding to SFMPs in a united and collaborative manner.

SAHPRA requests the support of all stakeholders, including the public, to curb the presence of SF products in our country.