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Ms Tamar Gabunia
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Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social
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Dear Ms Gabunia,

**Support for national medical procurement and supply chain management (PSM) systems in the WHO
European Region, with a focus on transitioning countries**

In all Member States, procurement and supply chain systems are under pressure to maintain delivery of essential medicines, priority medicines—including those HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria—as well as essential medicines and health products in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak. The context for each country is unique, but all share the need for strong PSM systems to ensure a reliable, affordable, and high-quality supply of health products to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Procurement and supply of medicines and health products is more complex than other commodities because of the need for coherence between necessary regulatory, legal and financial functions to ensure that the benefit package meets the population needs and represents value for money. In addition, a number of countries in the Region are also facing a 'triple transition': transition from donor aid; epidemiological transition in the types of products required; and a transition in health system organisation from disease specific programs and out-of-pocket spending, toward UHC¹. This transition can be supported by optimising the functioning of the PSM systems.

Recognising the importance of robust PSM systems, in November 2018, 17 Member States signed the Minsk 2 Statement of the Ministries of Health of Eastern Europe and Central Asia Countries on Expanding Access to Affordable and Quality Assured Medicines and Diagnostic Technologies. Minsk 2 signatories agreed to make urgent use of the best global practices and available tools. The 1st European Programme of Work, United action for better health in Europe, emphasizes the WHO Regional Office for Europe's commitment for providing support to this process².

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund); has provided funding to WHO to support PSM development in five of the transitioning countries: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan. As these five Member States transition out of eligibility, continuity of the supply of priority disease medicines requires assessment of risk factors and development of a careful transition strategy. Armenia,

¹ <https://www.cgdev.org/better-health-procurement>

² https://intranet.euro.who.int/references-and-resources/about-who/european-programme-of-work-epw/european-programme-of-work-epw/EPW_draft-09062020.pdf