



## Fight the Fakes

### *Statement to the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the conference of the parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*

Excellencies, Honorable Chair, Distinguished Delegates. Thank you very much for giving Fight the Fakes the opportunity to take the floor.

Fight the Fakes is a multi-stakeholder campaign of currently 41 organizations working across the medical supply chain, such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, wholesalers, manufacturers, patients, and the biopharmaceutical industry. Fight the Fakes and partners are working together to raise global awareness about the issue of substandard and falsified (SF) medicines and aim to give a voice to those who have been personally affected.

Fight the Fakes is deeply concerned about the growing global burden of substandard and falsified (SF) medicines. Having been a rising issue for years, the coronavirus pandemic has exaggerated the problem and provides ideal conditions for criminals to capitalize on people's fears and to advertise and sell falsified alleged COVID-19 medicines, vaccines or even "cures". To date there are no approved vaccines for COVID-19 and only two medicines have proven to significantly improve patient outcome. Two [WHO medical product alerts](#) concerning falsified medicines to treat COVID-19 were already issued, and with the potential authorization of a COVID-19 vaccine in the upcoming months, the risk of falsified versions of such vaccine being advertised is imminent.

Substandard and falsified medicines cause significant harm to patients and can lead to further illness, disability or even death. In addition, they undermine trust in health care professionals, impede access to high-quality healthcare and contribute to increasing drug resistance. Ultimately, substandard and falsified medicines present a serious obstacle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG target 3.8 which aims to "*achieve universal health coverage, including access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.*"

Fight the Fakes welcomes the work done by UNODC, particularly last year's launch of the 'Guide to Good Legislative Practices on Combating Falsified Medical Product-Related Crime' and its most recent research brief on COVID-19-related trafficking of falsified medical products. Fight the Fakes strongly supports the strengthening of existing legislation and adoption of new legislation to counter falsified medical products and make it punishable as a crime and not a mere offense of intellectual property infringement, in line with the United Nations *Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* and other relevant international conventions.

Fight the Fakes and partners are calling on all global health stakeholders, including governments, multilateral organisations, civil society, the private sector and patients, to work together and develop concrete actions to tackle the rising burden of falsified medicines. Raising public awareness, educating health care professionals, strengthening legislative frameworks, building robust and secure medical supply chains, and coordinating a harmonized global approach to tackle the manufacture and trafficking of falsified medical products will be crucial to address the issue in a holistic, effective way. Fighting falsified medicines is everybody's business.

Thank you.