

Preparedness of Nepal’s pharmaceutical sector in the face of LDC graduation

South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment and
Third World Network

Hotel Marriott, Kathmandu
2 October 2024

Nepal is graduating from the least developed country (LDC) group in 2026. As an LDC member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Nepal need not provide patent protection to pharmaceutical products. Thanks to the flexibilities for LDCs provided under the WTO’s Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), pharmaceutical companies in Nepal can produce patented medicines without providing patent rights and paying royalty to the innovators. Nepal will lose this flexibility upon LDC graduation. In this context, South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) and Third World Network have undertaken a study on the preparedness of Nepal’s pharmaceutical sector to cope with the challenges of the country’s LDC graduation. This workshop, organized by SAWTEE and TWN, brings together relevant stakeholders—from policymakers and the pharmaceutical industry to health professionals and civil society—to disseminate the findings of the study; analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the pharmaceutical industry in Nepal to face product patent protection; identify the preparedness of the pharmaceutical industry to make use of other TRIPS flexibilities; identify the major policy and institutional challenges for the optimal use of TRIPS flexibilities; and suggest the way forward.

Draft agenda

10:00-10:30	Registration and networking
10:30-10:40	Welcome remarks
10:40-11:10	Trigger presentation: Dr. Posh Raj Pandey, Chair Emeritus, SAWTEE
11:10-11:25	<i>Discussant:</i> Mr. Mahesh Prasad Pradhan, President, Association of Pharmaceutical Producers of Nepal
11:25-11:40	<i>Discussant:</i> Dr. Anil Bikram Karki, President, Nepal Medical Association
11:40-11:55	<i>Discussant:</i> Mr. Krishna Gyawali, Former Industry Secretary, Government of Nepal
11:55-12:10	<i>Discussant:</i> Mr. K M Gopakumar, Senior Researcher and Legal Advisor, Third World Network
12:10-12:45	Q&A
12:45-13:00	<i>Chief Guest’s remarks:</i> Prof. Shiva Raj Adhikari, Vice-Chairman, National Planning Commission
13:00-13:15	<i>Moderator’s remarks:</i> Mr. Narayan Prasad Dhakal, Director General, Department of Drug Administration, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal
13:15-13:20	<i>Vote of Thanks:</i> Ms. Ranja Sengupta, Senior Researcher and Head, India Office, Third World Network
	Lunch