

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **AİFD: CLOSE COLLABORATION AND HARSH PENALTIES KEY TO COMBATING COUNTERFEIT DRUGS**

A meeting was held in Istanbul by the Association of Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (AİFD) to discuss the latest developments in the world and in Turkey in the fight against counterfeit drugs. The participants, who included foreign and local experts, underlined the importance of establishing close collaboration between the Government and the industry to wage a successful campaign against counterfeit drugs, incorporating harsh penalties and deterrents. During the meeting it was also emphasized that counterfeit drugs caused loss of life globally, where in a case last year 84 children lost their lives because of counterfeit cough syrups.

**July 01, 2009, Istanbul.** With the introduction of a Drug Tracking System, which would mark the beginning of a new era in the fight against counterfeit drugs in Turkey, a meeting was held in Istanbul to discuss all aspects of the issue. Foreign and local experts, who participated in the meeting held by the Association of Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (AİFD) which gathers 39 innovative drug companies under its roof, considered the latest developments.

AİFD Secretary General and Chief Operating Officer Alp Sevindik and AİFD's Anti-Counterfeit Committee Chairperson Ahmet Kavuşturan were among the participants.

During the meeting, Julian Harris, an expert from International Policy Network, gave a presentation of his report, titled "Keeping it Real: Combating the Spread of Fake Drugs", and Robert Bate, an expert on health policy and counterfeit drugs from the American Enterprise Institute, gave an account of health risks posed by counterfeit drugs globally, and particularly in poor countries.

AİFD Secretary General and Chief Operating Officer Alp Sevindik underlined that drug counterfeiting in Turkey placed human lives at risk and lead to a waste of restricted national resources while diminishing confidence in the drug distribution system and the industry in general, and said:

"We don't have the precise figure as to the damage to the national economy by counterfeit drugs; in fact, the AİFD finds even the loss of 1 TL unacceptable over this problem. To prevent counterfeiting, we must vigorously protect Intellectual Property Rights with harsh penalties, attain a high level of collaboration between the

Government and the sector representatives, and elevate the deterrence level of measures. AiFD shall continue to follow up on consistent policies and practices.”

**AiFD’s Anti-Counterfeit Committee Chairperson Ahmet Kavuştur**an provided information on the scale of the problem in Turkey with counterfeit drugs. Emphasizing that counterfeit drugs posed a serious public health risk, Kavuştur

an said: “Therefore, the issue of counterfeit drugs deserve particular attention and exertions of the entire sector. Today, it is sometimes a virtual impossibility to tell the packaging of counterfeit drugs from those of authentic ones. The means of the Internet makes it possible for counterfeit drugs to proliferate around the globe. To guard against this threat, we continue to work closely with national and international institutions, law enforcement units and non-governmental organizations who are sensitive to this problem.”

### **“84 children died last year in Nigeria”**

In a presentation of his report, titled “Keeping it Real: Combating Spread of Fake Drugs”, International Policy Network expert Julian Harris addressed the global aspects of the problem.

Stating that before all else, fake drugs were harmful in that they did not deliver proper treatment, Harris said:

“Moreover, the toxic substances contained in them lead to fatalities. Last year, a large number of persons lost their lives in an incident where anti-freeze liquid was mixed with cough syrups. The dead included 84 Nigerian children. Again last year, 62 people in the US died of counterfeit drugs that were manufactured in China. Also, since counterfeit drugs do not effectively kill bacteria, they cause emergence of strains which are resistant to the drug, ultimately complicating the treatment against them.”

Harris listed the reasons how counterfeit drugs could be effective in a country:

“In countries where the legal framework is inadequate or punishments have no deterrent value, the dimensions of the counterfeit drugs problem are magnified. Also, counterfeit drugs thrive in environments where imports are restricted, original drugs are scarcely available, and drug prices are controlled to a degree that harms the industry dynamics.”

**American Enterprise Institute’s health policy and counterfeit drugs expert Roger Bate** said that the spread of counterfeit drugs were accelerating across Asia and Africa, seriously harming the effort to contain critical diseases like AIDS and malaria which are endemic in those regions.

**General Manager of Esfor Security Consultants, Cengiz Gümüştüs** stated that by 2010 the volume of counterfeit drugs would reach 75 billion dollars globally, and the problem would be aggravated in Turkey also.

Gümüřtüs made the following remarks: “In Turkey, counterfeit drugs are marketed over the Internet, pushed by street vendors or by counterfeit drug smugglers who we call “pouchers”. Our law enforcement units are waging an effective effort against counterfeit drugs and making wide-scale raids. However, the success of this effort ultimately depends on the collaboration between the state, industry and the society.”

During the meeting, some recommendations were made also to the consumers, who were advised to always buy drugs from a pharmacy which they know and trust and never over the Internet. Consumers were asked to contact the manufacturer, their physicians or healthcare authorities if they suspect the packaging or quality of a drug they have purchased.

### **About the Association of Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies**

Founded in 2003, the Association of Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies consists of 39 pharmaceutical companies with a focus on biotechnology and R&D, including Abbott, Actelion, Alcon, Astra Zeneca, Amgen, Astellas, Bayer, Boehringer Ingelheim, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Celgene, Chiesi, Daiichi-Sankyo, Eczacıbaşı–Baxter, Ferring, Fresenius Kabi, Fresenius Medical Care, Gilead, GlaxoSmithKline, İ.E. Ulagay, Indentis, Johnson&Johnson, Lilly, Lundbeck, Merck Serono, Merck Sharp & Dohme, Nestle, Novartis, Novo Nordisk, Nutricia Klinik Beslenme, Pfizer, PharmaSwiss, Pierre Fabre, Reckitt Benckiser, Sanofi Aventis, Schering-Plough, Servier, Solvay İlaç Türkiye, UCB Pharma, Wyeth, who are responsible for the greater part of new drug research worldwide.