

THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL TRADE POLICIES ON THE RIGHT TO ACCESS ESSENTIAL MEDICINES IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Most African states are turning to globalization as a gateway to improving the lives of people in Africa through product safety and intellectual property protection. To this end, a lot of attention has been focused on the opportunities that globalization of trade presents without paying much attention to the trade conditions, which, in most cases, are unfavourable in the long term to African countries. As such, there is a growing concern that trade is being pursued at the expense of ensuring respect and protection of health rights in general, and access to medicines in particular. This paper argues that whilst globalization presents many opportunities for people around the world, the loss of sight on the need to protect the social welfare needs of African Countries such as the right of the African peoples to access essential medicines may come at a significant cost. This paper examines the impacts of global trade policies on health rights in Africa, with specific emphasis on the TRIPS Agreement.