MFN, TRADE AND TARIFFS: THE FUTURE OF PERSONALISED MEDICINE

Protecting innovation, diagnostics and equitable patient access in a changing global environment

During the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Week

New York, Wednesday, 23 September 2026

14:00 - 18:15

United Nations
777 United Nations Plaza

Overview:

Personalised medicine depends on an interconnected global ecosystem. Medicines, biomarkers, companion diagnostics, laboratory inputs, clinical trials, data systems and specialist manufacturing routinely cross borders before they reach a patient.

Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) drug-pricing policies, pharmaceutical tariffs, localisation requirements and wider trade realignment could reshape that ecosystem. Their effects may extend beyond medicine prices to launch sequencing, licensing and investment, manufacturing, clinical research, diagnostic availability and health-system adoption.

Affordability, economic security and resilient supply chains are legitimate objectives. The challenge is to achieve them without delayed launches in smaller or lower-priced markets, reduced development of new medicines and post-approval indications, disrupted supply chains, greater commercial concentration or wider inequalities in biomarker-guided care.

The evidence is developing. Transactional analysis indicates that MFN may influence deal structures, pricing control and launch obligations, while economic modelling has projected possible effects on R&D and long-term patient health. The scale depends on policy design, market responses and modelling assumptions.

The conference will therefore provide an evidence-led, balanced forum rather than advocate for or against a single pricing model. It will bring together health, trade and finance policymakers, payers, regulators, clinicians, patients, economists, diagnostics leaders, manufacturers and innovation partners to examine the full pathway from policy decision to patient outcome.

Central question:

How can governments pursue affordability, trade security and supply-chain resilience without weakening the conditions required for personalised medicine to reach patients?

Expected conference outcome:

The meeting will conclude with the New York Principles on MFN, Trade and Personalised Medicine: policy safeguards and monitoring priorities for innovation, diagnostics, clinical research and equitable access.

Target audience:

Ministers and government representatives; health, trade, finance and industry ministries; international organisations; regulators; HTA bodies and payers; clinicians and clinical-trial leaders; molecular diagnostics, pathology and genomics experts; pharmaceutical, biotechnology and technology companies; manufacturing and supply-chain specialists; economists, trade-law and transaction experts; patient organisations; and global-health and implementation partners.

Wednesday, 23 September 2026
14:00 - 18:15

Conference Chair: Denis Horgan, *Secretary General, International Alliance for Personalised Medicine (confirmed)*

Moderator: Josep Figueras, *Director Emeritus, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (confirmed)*

14:00–14:40: Welcome and Opening Remarks

- **Swiss Permanent Representative to the UN**
- **Ruggero De Maria**, *President, Alliance Against Cancer (ACC), Board Member, International Alliance for Personalised Medicine (confirmed)*
- **Denis Horgan**, *Secretary General, International Alliance for Personalised Medicine (confirmed)*

14:40–15:30: Policy Keynote – When Trade Policy Becomes Health Policy

The opening keynote will establish a common vocabulary and explain why MFN pricing, international reference pricing, tariffs, trade agreements, localisation and onshoring policies must be examined as health-policy issues. It will distinguish US MFN drug-pricing approaches from the wider most-favoured-nation principle in international trade and consider how decisions taken by health, trade, finance and industry ministries interact.

Moderator: Josep Figueras, *Director Emeritus, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (confirmed)*

- **Fábio Franke**, *President, Brazilian Society of Clinical Oncology (SBOC); Director, Oncosite–Oncoclínicas Clinical Research Center, Brazil (confirmed)*
- **Vivek Subbiah**, *Associate Director for Drug Development and Precision Oncology, Stanford Cancer Institute; Executive Medical Director for Cancer Novel Therapies and Clinical Trial Network Development, Stanford Health Care, USA (confirmed)*
- **Michael Makanga**, *Executive Director, EDCTP, Belgium (confirmed)*
- **John Longshore**, *Head of Scientific Affairs, Global Oncology Diagnostics, AstraZeneca (confirmed)*

Discussion
Q&A

15:30–16:20: MFN Pricing: Affordability, Global Launch Strategies and Long-Term Patient Health

MFN seeks to reduce the prices paid in the United States by linking them to prices available in comparable countries. The affordability objective is clear, but international price linkage can transmit the effects of a decision in one market across many others.

The session will examine launch sequencing, delayed or avoided launches in lower-priced reference markets, confidential pricing arrangements and the consequences for smaller countries and lower-income health systems. It will also address the longer-term innovation question. Economic modelling has projected possible effects on R&D, new medicine approvals and post-approval indications. The scale is contested, but the issue is especially important where development continues through biomarker-defined subgroups, additional tumour types, combinations, paediatric indications and rare molecular populations.

How can immediate affordability objectives be achieved without transferring unacceptable costs to patients in other countries or to future patients awaiting the next generation of personalised treatments?

Moderator: Josep Figueras, *Director Emeritus, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (confirmed)*

- **Manmeet Ahluwalia,** *Deputy Director, Chief Scientific Officer and Chief of Medical Oncology, Miami Cancer Institute (confirmed)*
- **Kelly Saldana,** *Executive Director of the ISPOR Institute for Healthcare Transformation (confirmed)*
- **Dennis Flannelly**, *Head of Precision Medicine for US Oncology at Merck*
- **Stephanie Debette,** *Chair, Committee on Brain Health of the S7 & Director, Paris Brain Institute (confirmed)*
- **Jennifer Dent,** *President & CEO, BIO Ventures for Global Health (BVGH)*

Discussion
Q&A

16:20–16:45: Coffee and Networking Break

16:45–17:30: Trade, Tariffs, Manufacturing and Investment in Personalised Medicine

Personalised medicine depends on globally connected value chains spanning medicines, diagnostics, sequencing, pathology, advanced therapies, clinical-trial materials and specialist manufacturing.

Tariffs, localisation policies and MFN-style pricing may strengthen domestic investment and supply resilience, but they may also raise costs, disrupt established supply chains and influence launch strategies, licensing agreements and cross-border partnerships. These pressures may particularly affect smaller biotechnology companies and regional innovators.

The consequences ultimately reach the patient pathway:

Research → Clinical Trial → Diagnostic Test → Treatment → Follow-up

Changes in pricing, trade and investment policy may affect where trials are conducted, whether diagnostics and biomarker testing are available, and whether health systems have the infrastructure and workforce to deliver personalised care.

The session will examine how policy can strengthen resilience and investment without fragmenting the international innovation ecosystem or widening inequalities in access.

How can trade, pricing and industrial policy strengthen resilience without increasing costs or separating medicines from the diagnostics, trials and delivery pathways needed to reach patients?

Moderator: Vivek Subbiah, *Associate Director for Drug Development and Precision Oncology, Stanford Cancer Institute; Executive Medical Director for Cancer Novel Therapies and Clinical Trial Network Development, Stanford Health Care, USA (confirmed)*

- **Prashant Yadav**, *Senior Fellow for Global Health, Council on Foreign Relations (confirmed)*
- **Mitchell Elkind,** *Chief Science Officer - Brain Health and Stroke, American Heart Association (confirmed)*
- **Josep Figueras**, *Director Emeritus, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (confirmed)*
- **Oscar Arrieta Rodríguez,** *Head of the Thoracic Oncology Unit and Personalized Medicine Laboratory, Instituto Nacional de Cancerología (INCan), Mexico (confirmed)*
- **Zelia Bukhari,** *Global Health Advocacy, Policy & Communications Lead, The Wellbeing Foundation Africa (WBFA) (confirmed)*

Discussion
Q&A

17:30–18:15: Closing Policy Roundtable – Safeguards for Innovation and Equitable Access

The closing roundtable will move from diagnosis to policy action. Participants will consider how governments can pursue lower prices, economic security and supply-chain resilience while maintaining incentives for research, preserving international access and protecting the infrastructure needed for personalised medicine.

The discussion will focus on a practical framework for assessing the consequences of proposed measures before implementation and monitoring their real-world effects afterwards. This should include both immediate affordability and longer-term impacts on innovation, launch patterns, diagnostics, trials and health inequalities.

Moderator: **Josep Figueras**, *Director Emeritus, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (confirmed)*

18:15: Conference Conclusions and Next Steps

The Conference Chair will summarise the principal areas of agreement, the points requiring further evidence and the policy safeguards to be carried forward. The conclusions will form the basis of the New York Principles on MFN, Trade and Personalised Medicine.

The New York Principles on MFN, Trade and Personalised Medicine:

The proposed principles will recognise that affordability and equitable access are shared objectives, but that pricing and trade policies must be evaluated across the full personalised-medicine pathway. They will call for:

- **A patient-access test** *for all major pricing, tariff and localisation measures.*
- **Assessment of international spillovers** *including effects on smaller, lower-priced and lower-income markets.*
- **Protection of diagnostics and clinical research** *as inseparable components of access to personalised treatment.*

- **Safeguards for future innovation** *including new medicines, additional indications and biomarker-defined populations.*
- **Resilient and diversified supply chains** *without unnecessary duplication or concentration of critical capacity.*
- **Transparent monitoring** *of launch sequencing, trial activity, shortages, diagnostic access and health inequalities.*
- **Structured international dialogue** *between health, trade, finance, regulators, payers, patients and innovators.*
- **Periodic policy review** *based on real-world evidence rather than assumptions alone.*

Discussion
Q&A