

# Novartis to offer 15 drugs for \$1 to under-served populations

**BLOOMBERG**

September 30

Novartis AG plans to make 15 of its medicines — some of them still patent protected — available for \$1 per month to patients in poor countries.

The drugs to treat diseases such as cancer, diabetes, respiratory ailments and heart problems were selected based on the World Health Organisation's essential medicines list, Chief Executive Officer Joe Jimenez wrote in a guest column published by *Forbes* on Wednesday.

The new program, dubbed Novartis Access, comes as pharmaceutical companies draw fire from politicians in the US for charging too much for crucial medicines.

Democrats in the US House of Representatives asked to subpoena Valeant

**The drugs to treat diseases such as cancer, diabetes, respiratory ailments and heart problems were selected based on the World Health Organisation's essential medicines list**

Pharmaceuticals International Inc. this week, causing the drugmakers shares to slide, for documents relating to drug price increases.

"Not only do we need to serve people who live in countries that can afford treatment, but we should also help expand access to the most underserved populations," Jimenez wrote.

**Need of the hour**

What is needed are social

business programmes or innovative business models that build local, sustainable capabilities which create an impact for society that can endure over time.

Novartis' project will be rolled out in 30 low- and middle-income countries spanning Africa, Asia, Latin America and Central Eastern Europe, according to the Jimenez. The Basel, Switzerland-based company is in talks with Kenya, Ethiopia and Vietnam.

**Diverse challenges**

These three countries have significant and diverse access challenges, yet also have existing Novartis presence on the ground, allowing for full engagement, Jimenez said.

"The learnings from the markets will be essential to our plans for expanding to additional countries."

Company / Industry