SPECIAL PROCEDURES
UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

A Note of Gratitude

Early last year, we embarked on a journey to put together an application to the WHO to request the addition of sunscreen to the Model Lists of Essential Medicines. The primary purpose of the application was to strongly advocate, with the backing of scientific data, for the inclusion of sunscreen in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines and motivated by the urgent need to address the growing health concerns of skin cancer—a major cause of deaths for persons with albinism.

Today, the WHO expert committee on the selection and use of essential medicines endorsed the application and added sunscreen on the Model List of Essential Medicines. For persons with albinism whose lived experiences are largely defined by vulnerability to ultraviolet radiation with disproportionate risks of skin cancer, access to sunscreen would be transformational, impactful and a game changer.

As we welcome and celebrate the WHO decision, I want to thank you all for making this incredible journey worthwhile. Through your support, solidarity and active participation in meetings—often called at short notices—you invested time and knowledge and made personal sacrifices in the interest and good of others. Almost all made themselves available voluntarily or readily accepted my request for support without condition or monetary reward.

I am truly humbled and grateful for this unconditional solidarity from you all—member states, albinism groups, scientists, activists, academics, NGOs, and above all, persons with albinism globally, whose lived experiences provided the inspiration for this journey. To them this decision is dedicated, and for them this mandate was created to complement their remarkable resilience and devotion to putting together the building blocks of a better world.

Indeed, this victory—small as it may look in the grander scheme of challenges faced by persons with albinism globally—underlines the significant positive impact that

collective efforts and deeper partnerships can play when we put our hearts and minds together.

I remain profoundly touched by the efforts of all of you and would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the work you have done, memories you have created, and the inspiration you have embodied.

Yours sincerely,



Muluka-Anne Miti-Drummond

UN Independent Expert on enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism

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Historical Timelines on the Application for Addition of Sunscreen to the WHO EML

- **May 2022**: *Albinism secretariat (Jolene Tautakitaki) at the request of the Independent Expert, initiated first contact with the WHO EML Secretariat to request a meeting between the EML secretariat and the Independent Expert*.
- **3 June 2022**: Independent Expert and Albinism s*ecretariat (Jolene Tautakitaki) met with the EML secretariat to explore the prospects of the addition of sunscreen on the model list and modalities of application.*
- **June – July 2022**: *The Independent Expert consulted several partners to gauge interest and solicit their support* with GAA, IDLS, Beyond Suncare, and PFF indicating strong interest in being co-applicants.
- ***3 September 2022*** *- The Global Albinism Alliance kindly offer to lead the drafting process.*
- **16 December 2022**: Draft of the first application to have sunscreen added to the WHO EML for persons with albinism and those with a condition that make them more vulnerable to skin cancer finalised by the Global Albinism Alliance formally submitted by the Independent Expert with the *Global Albinism Alliance, Pierre Fabre Foundation, Beyond Suncare, ILDS, Global Skin and Standing Voice as co-applicants.*
- **26 July 2023**: *The WHO EML secretariat announced that the application for sunscreen had not been successful. It provided written comments to the Independent Expert on the reasons.*

- ***20 June 2024****: The Albinism secretariat (Abou Jeng) held consultation with the Independent Expert on the prospects of resurrecting the application with a revamped submission.*

- ***27 June 2024:*** *The Albinism secretariat held an exploratory meeting with the EML Secretariat to seek advice on the prospects of a second application.*

- ***8 July 2024:*** *A meeting between the Albinism secretariat and the EML was held for guidance on the submission of a second revamped application.*

- ***26 July 2024****: Christa Cepuch, a health specialist, was introduced to the Albinism secretariat for possible support in the drafting of the second application.*

- ***8 August 2024****: Christa Cepuch and the Independent Expert held a virtual meeting where Christa agreed to support the drafting of the application on a voluntary basis.*

- ***15 August 2024****: The Independent Expert held a meeting with a group of scientists to introduce Christa and explore ideas on an initial draft*

- ***16 August – 30 October****: Several meetings were held between the Independent Expert and the committee to review and consolidate a draft application. Online petition by Africa Albinism Network and CBM Global to have sunscreen re-added to the WHO EML initiated around the same time*

- ***1 November 2024****: application consolidated by Christa submitted to the EML secretariat with the Special Rapporteur on climate change and the Africa Albinism Network joining the Global Albinism Alliance, Pierre Fabre Foundation, Beyond Suncare, ILDS, and Standing Voice as co-applicants.*

- ***5 March – 18 April 2025****: A campaign was initiated to encourage individuals and organizations to submit letters of support to the EML. 20 letters of support, including from the Permanent Mission to Geneva of Tanzania were submitted. The letter from the Union Latinoamericana de Albinismo was endorsed by over 30 organisations.*

- ***5 May 2025****: The Independent Expert attended in person the open session for the EML application at the WHO in Geneva and delivered a statement. Clara Maliwa, who has albinism and undergone treatment for skin cancer, also attended.*