

Medicines for the developing world : innovation and economic policy

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PROPOSITIONS

Medicines for the Developing World: Innovation, Economics and Policy

RUTGER DAEMS

I.

Infectious diseases create health and economic burdens in both developed and developing countries. In developing countries though because most people suffering from these diseases are poor, there is no incentive to invest in the development of new medicines, exacerbating the vicious circle between poverty and poor health.

II.

Financial incentives, rather than scientific knowledge, are the major barrier to developing new medicines for diseases that disproportionately affect the largest part of the population in the world.

III.

The fact that two forces must be coupled to stimulate R&D on neglected diseases: 'technology push' strategies based upon the creation of new knowledge, and 'market pull' mechanisms that reward output, makes innovation policy on neglected diseases one of the most challenging research areas.

IV.

The 'investment-risk-incentive' model helps managers and policymakers to calculate the size of donor funds needed to initiate pharmaceutical R&D on products that benefit developing countries; the rest requires personal conviction and a moral belief that all people are equal in health care research.

V.

Alternative innovation frameworks like open source are a supplement but not a substitute for a pharmaceutical or biotechnology firm's intellectual property rights (IPRs).

VI.

While financial innovations appeared useful tools to spread risks beyond financial managers understanding, the present financial crisis also challenges the priorities in carrying out R&D beyond research managers understanding. Those priorities will have to become less financial and more human again, capturing also the energy and passion of those trying to build a better world.

VII.

If there is one thing which the financial crisis has made clear, it is that private firms cannot on their own tackle the grand challenges the world faces, they will increasingly have to collaborate with the public sector and universities in particular and NGOs.

VIII.

Inventing the pill that cures all diseases eventually kills Schumpeter's theory of creative destruction.

IX.

In God we trust; from all other donors we demand hard currency.

X.

Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming it. (*Helen Keller*)

XI.

It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop. (*Confucius*)