The 3rd meeting with manufacturers of the WHO Prequalification of Medicines Programme (PQP) will be combined with UNICEF’s 2012 pharmaceutical supplier meeting. This joint event will provide a forum at which pharmaceutical manufacturers, medicines quality, safety and efficacy experts, medicines procurement agencies and international donors working in public health can come together to focus on production and supply of quality essential medicines. Six sessions are planned, covering:

- projected demand and markets for quality essential medicines
- UNICEF priorities for essential medicines for women and children
- review of UNICEF procurement operations and requirements
- an accelerated procedure for registration of WHO-prequalified medicines
- updates on WHO medicines prequalification procedures and guidelines
- critical and major observations from WHO inspections of medicines manufacturing sites and contract research organizations.

UNICEF is a world leader in the procurement of supplies for children. The central objective of UNICEF Procurement Services is to assist development partners in the procurement of quality, value-for-money supplies from reliable manufacturers. In this way, partners can use and learn from UNICEF’s expertise in their own efforts to help children.

Procurement Services provides a broad approach to supply management, building on national capacities, and includes technical assistance, management services and supply services.

In addition, PQP will invite several manufacturers to make a brief presentation on an issue of importance and concern that relates to medicines quality, medicines procurement and/or medicines distribution. The focus will be on issues that have implications for patients’ access to quality-assured medicines. Any manufacturer interested in making such a presentation is invited to contact Dr Lembit Rägo (ragol@who.int), copied to Jacqueline Sawyer (sawyerj@who.int).

The WHO Prequalification of Medicines Programme (PQP) was established with the aim of verifying that the quality of urgently needed medicines for treatment programmes for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria meet international pharmaceutical requirements. It has since expanded across different therapeutic categories, and greatly increased its training and capacity building activities. In late 2010 it initiated prequalification of active pharmaceutical ingredients. As a result of PQP’s activities, procurers can now select from an increased range of quality-assured products for treatment programmes for HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, while many manufacturers have raised the quality of their manufacture and become eligible for international tenders.

Members of the PQP assessment, inspection and technical assistance teams will be available to meet with representatives of individual manufacturers (as will members of UNCEF’s procurement team). Manufacturers will be able to raise questions relating to current or proposed dossier submissions, and to seek further information regarding PQP guideline requirements for pharmaceutical quality, and to efficacy and safety. Manufacturers can request such a meeting by contacting Dr Milan Smid (Head of Capacity Building and Technical Assistance, smidm@who.int), Dr Matthias Stahl (Head of Assessments, stahlm@who.int) or Ian Thrussell (Head of Inspections, thrusselli@who.int). Manufacturers interested in meeting with UNICEF procurement staff should contact Charlotte Thaarup (cthaarup@unicef.org).