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Medicines Security: From Supply Continuity to National Resilience

Why essential medicines must be governed as strategic infrastructure.

Executive argument

Medicines shortages are often treated as isolated procurement failures. In reality, they reveal the condition of a wider national system connecting science, manufacturing, regulation, logistics, capital, technology and public authority. Medicines security is the sustained capacity to assure trusted and equitable access through disruption.

The strategic shift

A continuity model asks whether a product arrives. A resilience model asks whether institutions can anticipate exposure, absorb shocks, adapt operations and recover without unacceptable harm. This broadens analysis from stock levels to capabilities, dependencies, governance and decision speed.

Policy priorities

Governments should identify critical medicines, map multi-tier dependencies, establish cross-government ownership, align procurement with resilience goals and exercise shortage scenarios. Industry should give boards decision-grade visibility of concentrated suppliers and recovery options.

Conclusion

Medicines security should be treated as a permanent national capability rather than an emergency project.

Institutional note

This foundational paper advances the Medicines Security Institute's developing research programme. It supports informed discussion and does not constitute medical, legal or investment advice.