IN THE NEWS

Poor countries can copy patented drugs

The World Trade Organisation agreed to extend a waiver set to expire in January 2016 that allows poor countries to copy patented medicines to 2033.

The countries that will benefit from the waiver are "Least Developed Countries" – or LDCs – and include many African and some Asian countries. About half of the 900 million people in these countries live on less than US$1.25 a day. The waiver is critical for the LDCs, because they have high rates of infectious diseases such as HIV and malaria.

The Conversation:
www.bit.ly/1HjKpUV

In Mongolia, open data may aid air quality

Mongolians are increasingly turning to open data and smartphone apps to monitor air quality as the country's government plans to cut funds for clean air efforts, according to advocates. The country's capital, Ulaanbaatar, is among the five cities with the worst air pollution in the world due to heavy industry and coal-based household cooking and heating. Yet data on pollution hotspots and trends is rare. A prototype smartphone creates an online database and global map of air pollution. They hope the public and scientists will exchange real-time information about pollution and take action.

SciDevNet:
www.bit.ly/1P9eDNj

China becoming global leader in renewable energy

In the past five years, China has become the top investor in renewable energy, far outstripping the European Union, the former market leader. The country will likely overtake the EU in installations of new wind and solar technology in the next five years, if its plans hold up, said climate change think tank E3G. Last year, cumulative sales of electric vehicles in China reached 450,000, 50% higher than in the EU.

Quartz:
www.bit.ly/1pRqK70

Zimbabwe gets its first supercomputer

Zimbabwe has launched its first ever supercomputer, at a cost of $5.4 million, becoming the third African country to have such information technology as it aims to address the needs of the country's scientists. Supercomputers are used for complex jobs such as processing massive sets of data to find information, run simulations and solve large and complex problems. The supercomputer is being kept at the University of Zimbabwe and was built by Chinese computer manufacturer Inspur Group with a loan from the Chinese government.

The Herald-Zimbabwe:
www.bit.ly/1P2FZ4R

ATMs bring cheap, safe water to Nairobi

Last year a public-private partnership between Nairobi Water and Sewerage Company, the city's main water distribution company, and Grundfos, a Danish water engineering firm, resulted in the installation of water vending machines.
The machines are expected to revolutionise water availability and distribution to populations that have long been at the mercy of water cartels and a changing, unreliable climate. By a simple swipe of a smart card on the ATM's sensor, water is released from the main storage and into a waiting container.

The Guardian:
www.bit.ly/1onD7qs