



statement

WHO Afro 68 agenda item 14: Roadmap for access 2019–2023: Comprehensive support for access to medicines and vaccines

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Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion today. IFPMA represents leading research-based pharmaceutical companies as well as national and regional industry associations across the world, including three in Africa.

The IFPMA welcomes the WHO's ambitious 13 General Programme of Work, which recognizes that to achieve its UHC goal (ensure a billion more people benefit from UHC), it must include access to affordable and quality-assured medicines, vaccines and health products. A broad range of policies is required to holistically address real barriers to access to medicines, particularly "domestic investment in coverage schemes that reduces out-of-pocket payments", while simultaneously ensuring sustainability of future medical innovation. Therefore, a WHO Roadmap on access to medicines and vaccines is useful for global health if it facilitates a collective understanding of the key issues that create barriers, such as the lack of treatment financing, supply chain inefficiencies, lack of investment in the health workforce, weak health and regulatory systems; and if it catalyses actions, through concerted efforts rallying public and private actors, that result in tangible benefits for patients worldwide.

We commend the work of the WHO AFRO region in investing in health, for example, by creating the African Medicines Agency. IFPMA welcomes this important milestone as the new AMA will support the varying regulatory capacities of its member states and will help establish a comprehensive, regional system of regulatory supervision that serves to harmonize regulations across national boundaries. It is a vital step that will help improve timely access to effective and safe quality therapies, and vaccines for all patients, in every corner of Africa.

Another example is WHO AFRO Business Case for Immunization. A landmark document for which we commend WHO AFRO leadership and ambition to foster a Universal Health Coverage approach for 2030 that puts immunization at the core of primary care. The shift from a disease-specific to an integrated, multi-sectoral life-course approach within the broader health system and tailored strategies to address country' specific needs based on the maturity of their immunization system will be critical in saving at least 1.9 million lives, avert 167 million cases and save up to \$58 billion over ten years. The WHO AFRO Business Case has the potential to become the foundation of the post-2020 global immunization strategy supporting domestic investment decisions, and replenishment efforts. With this, and the growing effective collaborations across the health community and continued engagement of private sector partners, momentum is on our side once more for achieving breakthroughs in global public health.

Partnerships are essential to advance global health and in particular access to medicines, as Dr. Tedros shared in his speech during the 2018 WHA - "By leveraging the experience, the skills, resources and networks of our partners, our impact can be exponentially larger than if we were acting alone...To truly fulfil our mandate, we must make our partnerships even deeper and stronger". Private sector contribution "to UHC in service delivery, innovation, investment, and as employers" is also fully recognized in the GPW. IFPMA and its members are engaged in Africa through more than 210 active partnerships.

IFPMA regrets that the current draft of the WHO Roadmap does not include these examples of successful efforts undertaken by the region to address access barriers, and does not ensure a holistic and multi-stakeholder approach to access, nor create a coherent strategy to manage this issue.

Improving access to medicines across the world is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Sustainable and forward-looking solutions to health system access challenges can only be achieved through ensuring continued medical innovation, which rests upon the provision of incentives through IP protection, together with health systems strengthening, supply chain management, regulatory capacity building, strengthening primary health care and timely diagnosis; and recognize the importance of strong IP protection for sustainable future medical innovation. Without solving these challenges in a holistic manner, there will be very limited access for patients whether these health products are generic or innovative.

IFPMA looks forward to constructive discussions on the Access to Medicines Roadmap, which should contribute to greater clarity and focus by the WHO in its important efforts to increase access to medicines.

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