



African research foundation partners with international pharmaceutical industry to strengthen capacity for health innovation in Africa

28 September 2021, Cape Town/Geneva – [H3D-Foundation \(H3D-F\)](#) and the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA) announced today a three-year partnership to strengthen capacity for health innovation in Africa. The two organizations will combine forces to focus on driving capacity strengthening for drug discovery and development in Africa by scaling existing initiatives and identifying new development opportunities for young and mid-career scientists in the region.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgent need to bolster Africa's ability, including its drug innovation capabilities, to face future health emergencies. Africa only conducts approximately 2 percent of world research on new infections, despite shouldering a quarter of the global disease burden¹. While the continent is better prepared now to contribute to new healthcare threats as they emerge compared to a few decades ago, the disease focus remains narrow and is often not fully aligned with regional priorities. According to H3D-F, a foundation established to reduce barriers for health innovation and actively support African researchers and centers within the field of drug discovery and related sciences, the continent is primed for progress but requires an integrated health innovation ecosystem, investment in robust infrastructure, technology platforms, a critical mass of skilled talent, and job creation.

"The University of Cape Town Holistic Drug Discovery & Development (H3D) centre is the only integrated drug discovery and development platform in Africa. Over the last 10 years, it has proven itself as a platform to develop world class infrastructure, talent, and health innovation that will contribute to improving lives not only in Africa, but all over the world. We are ready to take our work to the next level through partnership and collaboration with key organizations like IFPMA, strengthening capacity far beyond H3D," said Kelly Chibale, Chairman and CEO of H3D-F and Founder and Director of H3D.

Africa now hosts over 250 research sites and 73 vaccine clinical trials, but there are many gaps to fill². For example, less than 10 universities provide vaccinology courses and only two local universities engage in vaccine-related pre-clinical studies³. IFPMA's role is to be an anchor partner to provide short- to mid-term support in increasing awareness of H3D-F activities to develop and strengthen the capacity of human resources for health innovation in Africa. It will facilitate networking and visibility across the innovation ecosystem through its membership and offer opportunities for collaboration from drug development to market. Shared aims of the organizations are to call attention to drug innovation and access in the region – key pillars to achieving the sustainable development goals and universal health coverage.

"Global product development research, driven by local needs, is pivotal to achieving shared global goals," said Greg Perry, Assistant Director General of IFPMA. "Some of our partners, including Johnson and Johnson, MSD, and Novartis, already work with H3D. With H3D-F, now

¹ African Union and Africa CDC. (2021). Discussion paper on Africa's Vaccine Manufacturing for Health Security at the Conference on Expanding Africa's Vaccine Manufacturing: <https://africacdc.org/event/virtual-conference-expanding-africas-vaccine-manufacturing/>.

² Ibid

³ Ibid



is the time to forge long-term relationships that lay the foundation for scientific coordination, communication, and discovery in Africa. IFPMA is proud to support H3D-F's efforts.”

About the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA)

IFPMA represents research-based pharmaceutical companies and associations across the globe. The research-based pharmaceutical industry's two million employees research, develop, and provide medicines and vaccines that improve the life of patients worldwide. Based in Geneva, IFPMA has official relations with the United Nations and contributes industry expertise to help the global health community find solutions that improve global health.

About H3D Foundation (H3D-F)

[H3D-F](#) aims to position Africa as a global player in innovative pharmaceutical R&D by building infrastructure as well as the skills of African scientists and researchers. The Foundation further aims to serve as a convening platform and credible voice for evidence-based global health views. It was established in 2019 to build on the success of the H3D Centre's capacity development programs, which include the Global Health Mentorship Program and the Grand Challenges Africa Drug Discovery Program, which engages more than 40 scientists in over six African countries.

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