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News Release

Research-Based Pharmaceutical Industry welcomes World Health Assembly outcome on vaccines, fake medicines and non-communicable diseases

Geneva, 24 May 2011 – As one of the 189 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO), and in line with WHO principles governing relations with NGOs, representatives of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations (IFPMA) were present to listen to the proceedings of the 64th World Health Assembly (WHA). The IFPMA followed with particular interest decisions made by member governments on pandemic influenza preparedness and fake medical products. The WHA decisions represent an important milestone in influenza pandemic preparedness and will improve influenza virus sharing and access to vaccines, but areas remain for improvement especially in terms of sustaining the appropriate production capacity which may still be insufficient for global populations in the future. The decisions taken on fake medicines provides a viable basis to build on existing work; it remains however in the longer term vital to establish a platform for international collaboration to protect patients from the dangers of fake medicines.

The WHA agreed on the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework, the culmination of four years of negotiation, which lays the groundwork for better preparedness. The research-based pharmaceutical industry commends the World Health Assembly's decision to adopt the PIP Framework and sees it as a unique solution in protecting the world against future pandemic influenza outbreaks. Mindful of its role in pandemic preparedness activities, the IFPMA sought to engage constructively during previous negotiations and will continue to provide valuable input to the WHO and Member States regarding vaccines, antivirals and details of the PIP Framework. The commitments represent a significant contribution from IFPMA members to global preparedness and should be built upon by other stakeholders. The next phase is to ensure the implementation of the agreement. IFPMA members believe it is crucial that any implementation process continues to allow for rapid access to pandemic viruses and for benefits to be allocated to those countries most in need.

The Assembly considered the main findings and recommendations of the report of the Review Committee on the functioning of the International Health Regulations (IHR) in relation to the 2009 H1N1 pandemic. WHA delegates agreed to follow the recommendations of the Review Committee. Eduardo Pisani, IFPMA Director General explains the key learnings for the research-based pharmaceutical industry: "It has reminded us that timely access to candidate vaccine viruses and reagents is vital; secondly, that rapid evaluation and approval mechanisms for vaccines must be in place along with effective distribution networks; and thirdly, that seasonal vaccination recommendations provide a means to reduce the burden of influenza whilst sustaining and increasing global vaccine production capacity."

The Assembly discussed the report on improving access to quality and affordable medical products from the working group on substandard/spurious/falsely-labelled/falsified/counterfeit (SSFFC) medical products and agreed to allow the working group to complete its work and report to the 65th World Health Assembly. The research-based pharmaceutical industry welcomes the Member States' decision at the WHA to prolong the working group on SSFFC for a further year. Going forward, the IFPMA believes the WHO has a crucial leadership role to play in helping to ensure that medicines everywhere are of high quality, safe and efficacious, and that they are also what they purport to be. It will also be vital for Member States to agree on an appropriate long-term platform for international collaboration which puts patient safety at its core. This will permit the building of a truly global shared commitment to address the fake medicine issue effectively, as part

of the broader effort to combat poor quality medicines. To do anything less would be play into the hands of the criminals who are profiting at the expense of patients' health.

The Assembly approved a resolution that prepares for the United Nations General Assembly high-level meeting on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCD) being held this September. The IFPMA welcomes the adopted resolution supporting the WHO leadership on this topic. The IFPMA was among the observers to deliver a statement at the WHA. Beside investing in research and development of new medicines, IFPMA members are also involved in many partnerships with governments, inter-governmental organizations and civil society to help strengthen healthcare capacity in developing countries and educate populations at risk. Given the importance of prevention, IFPMA members have implemented workplace wellness programs that benefit over one million employees worldwide. The IFPMA is committed to sharing its experience as a leader in innovation and delivery of medicines and to listening to the voice of other stakeholders to identify efficient, effective, and sustainable solutions to improve the health of patients today, and nurture further innovation to meet the needs of tomorrow.

About the IFPMA:

The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations is the global non-profit NGO representing the research-based pharmaceutical industry, including the biotech and vaccine sectors. Its members comprise 26 leading international companies and 44 national and regional industry associations covering low, middle and high income countries. The industry's R&D pipeline contains hundreds of new medicines and vaccines being developed to address global disease threats, including cancer, heart disease, HIV/AIDS and malaria. The IFPMA Clinical Trials Portal (www.ifpma.org/ClinicalTrials), the IFPMA's Ethical Promotion online resource (www.ifpma.org/EthicalPromotion/) and its Developing World Health Partnerships Directory (www.ifpma.org/HealthPartnerships) help make the industry's activities more transparent. The IFPMA supports a wide range of WHO technical activities, notably those relating to medicine efficacy, quality and safety. It also provides the secretariat for the International Conference on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH).

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