



statement

IFPMA Statement on the “Solidarity Call to Action to realize equitable global access to COVID-19 health technologies through pooling of knowledge, intellectual property and data”

28 May 2020 - The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound health, social and economic impact around the world. The [biopharmaceutical industry has made addressing the pandemic](#) its top priority, devoting its resources, expertise, know-how, and intellectual assets to developing potential treatments and vaccines at record speed, while committing to and engaging in unprecedented levels of international collaboration and coordination through initiatives such as [ACT-A](#), [ACTIV](#) and [CEPI](#) to ensure equitable access to products being developed.

While we share a number of the objectives of access and cooperation of the “Solidarity Call to Action,” we disagree with some of its premises, as they imply that intellectual property (IP) rights that are not waived or licensed globally are potential barriers to R&D, public-private collaborations or access to COVID-19 products. This does not correspond to our experience, and may be counterproductive to achieving the objectives of the Solidarity Call to Action.

The intellectual property system has enabled collaboration between biopharmaceutical innovators and governments, universities and other research partners to speed up progress on our most pressing unmet medical needs, including hundreds of potential COVID-19 treatments and vaccines for patients around the world. IP will continue to play a crucial role long after this pandemic is over to ensure that the world is prepared with innovative solutions for the next outbreak, in addition to other pressing healthcare needs.

By urging licenses or non-enforcement declarations for COVID-19 treatments and vaccines to be granted on a non-exclusive global basis, the Solidarity Call to Action promotes a one-size-fits all model that disregards the specific circumstances of each situation, each product and each country. Different regions and countries will face different challenges regarding the manufacture and distribution of COVID-19 treatments and vaccines. Any access tools, including patent licensing mechanisms, should therefore allow for customized solutions to real-world problems that may arise.

Long before this pandemic, several IFPMA member companies have established long-term partnerships with the Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) to license their HIV, tuberculosis, and hepatitis C products to well over a hundred countries. The MPP’s [recently-expanded mandate](#) to include COVID-19 technologies adds to the options available to companies in establishing their access initiatives. Separate from the MPP, many companies have made and acted on commitments to voluntarily license COVID-19 related IP, to donate millions of doses of their promising candidates, and to make other arrangements to ensure equitable access to their products. Like these individual commitments, one of the key factors behind the success of the MPP rests on its capacity to propose tailor-made approaches for each product and each country. We believe this approach should be maintained and applied to COVID-19 products as well.

Biopharmaceutical companies remain [committed](#) to working day and night to find solutions to tackle this pandemic and invite all stakeholders to build the bridges needed for meaningful collaboration to succeed.