



# statement

## **WHA 71 agenda item 11.5 Addressing the global shortage of, and access to, medicines and vaccines**

*Delivered by Grega Kumer*

IFPMA welcomes WHO's progress in developing a framework to avert shortages. While supply is one factor, shortages are influenced by a range of issues, such as stock management, procurement delays, unpredictable country demand, and complex regulatory requirements. We encourage partners to address the main challenges of national stockouts and we call for the timely dialogue and collaboration between manufacturers and public health authorities to prevent shortages, anticipate the evolution of national health programs, ensure more accurate demand forecasting, and reduce and harmonize regulatory approval times for post-approval changes and in-country testing for lot release.

IFPMA supports the WHO's efforts to promote Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as a core element of the GPW. We look 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. In order to be effective, the roadmap should take into account all dimensions of the complex issues of access to medicines.

We need to focus on health systems strengthening, supply chain management, regulatory capacity building, strengthening primary health care and timely diagnosis. Without solving these challenges there will be very limited access for patients whether generic or innovative. We must also recognize the importance of strong IP protection to the development and diffusion of medicines.

We regret that, again, some attention was given to the disputable report of the UN High Level Panel on Access to Medicines. Improving access to medicines across the world is one of the greatest challenges of our time, yet, as underscored by a number of Member States, the Panel's report has failed to address the genuine barriers to access that are critical to meet the targets of the UN's SDGs. Therefore, neither this report nor its recommendations can be a sound basis for the Access to Medicines Roadmap.

IFPMA and its members are committed to working with national governments and other stakeholders in the spirit of partnership to address the systemic causes of shortages and genuine barriers to access to medicines.