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Pharma analysis of lessons learned from COVID-19 pandemic informs and offers shared solutions to consolidate innovation successes and improve equitable access for future pandemic response

- Swift pathogen surveillance and sharing, an enabling innovation ecosystem, and regulatory agility are among the biopharmaceutical industry's 10 lessons learned in the process of successfully developing COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. These lessons must be preserved for future ability to fight against unknown diseases.
- The most important lesson of the report is that we must redouble collective efforts to achieve health equity, while ensuring health systems and delivery infrastructure are strengthened.
- The biopharmaceutical industry is committed to working with stakeholders. It is ready to contribute game changing solutions to equitable access to ensure vulnerable populations are prioritized, which the report shows is only possible if upfront funding is secured and barriers to trade on exporting pandemic products are eliminated.

GENEVA, May 23 2022 —In a [report](#) that builds on its experience of developing and manufacturing vaccines, treatments, and diagnostics to tackle COVID-19, the biopharmaceutical industry shares lessons learned for future pandemic preparedness.

The report identifies innovation and early sharing of pathogens as having been critical in helping tackle the pandemic and should be sustained to avoid being caught unprepared when the inevitable next public health crisis arrives. Another lesson for future pandemics in the report asserts the need for collective action to radically improve equitable access to COVID-19 products. The biopharmaceutical industry is committed to playing its part to help ensure that, for future pandemics, the people at the highest risk are prioritized to receive vaccines, treatments, and diagnostics with no delays, no matter where they live. However, the report underscores that such solutions will require funding certainty for early decision making on procuring pandemic products, as well as eliminating all trade and regulatory barriers to export. The report also underscores the need to strengthen health care systems and ensure countries have a sufficient absorptive capacity and ability to administer care properly.

"We have learned a lot from COVID-19, including what worked and what didn't. Collectively, we need to consolidate our successes and improve on our failures. The world was ill-prepared for COVID-19, and even many of the globe's most advanced health systems were overwhelmed by the largest public health crisis in over a century," says Thomas Cueni, Director General of IFPMA.

Early on in the pandemic, the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations laid out its [commitments](#) to communicate, guide, and measure our work in the fight against COVID-19. Since May 2021, when COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing scale up looked set to reach 11 billion doses by the end of 2021, industry has called for urgent action to increase



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equitable access, including stepping up responsible dose sharing, removing trade barriers and supporting country readiness.

“As we move from panic to neglect, we often forget what a remarkable achievement the development at record speed scaling up of COVID-19 vaccines was” said Cueni. One of the challenges in this pandemic was that companies with the most sought-after vaccines were oversubscribed by rich countries, addressing this shortcoming needs collaboration from multiple stakeholders. “One solution to build in better equitable access from the beginning for future pandemics is to put aside part of their production upfront for vulnerable populations in lower income countries. would be a real game changer” suggests Cueni. Such an approach would require others to play their part, such as rich countries providing upfront funding for advanced procurement agreements as well as open borders and free trade.

Cueni concludes: “COVID-19 has taught the global healthcare community priceless lessons. Let’s use them to make our defenses against the next pandemic more nimble, more robust, and — above all — more equitable. This is only possible with all stakeholders working together”.

The foundation of any pandemic response lies in global leaders investing in pathogen surveillance and mandating the quick and seamless sharing of data across borders. As soon as a country identifies a new pathogen, scientists across the globe need access to its genetic information so they can start developing drugs and diagnostics. Leaders must also continue building, and defending, the legal frameworks and research ecosystems that enable scientists to make medical breakthroughs.

Scientific advances have driven vaccine and therapeutic development at historic speed and scale, and the biopharmaceutical industry response has played a critical role in the development and manufacturing of safe and effective vaccines and treatments.

“These vaccines and treatments were only possible thanks to decades-long investment in research and an enabling intellectual property framework that encouraged swift, voluntary partnerships across the private, public, and academic sectors,” said Jean Christophe Tellier, CEO UCB and President of IFPMA. “Regulatory flexibility and collaboration among the leading agencies proved invaluable in bringing these breakthroughs to people. We must continue strengthening the trust, partnerships, and intellectual property framework that made these successes possible.”

The biopharmaceutical industry’s 10 lessons learned from COVID-19 are:

1. Health security starts with pathogen surveillance and sharing
2. Partnerships accelerate R&D and manufacturing
3. Advance market commitments support manufacturing scale-up for global pandemic response
4. Innovation is essential for preparedness and response
5. Global upstream supply chains disruptions put production and distribution at risk
6. An established procurement mechanism for low-income countries is vital



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7. Regulatory agility and convergence guard safety and speed of access
8. Vaccine nationalism imperils everyone
9. Delivery infrastructure must be strengthened
10. Vaccine confidence is critical for success.

About the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & 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.

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