



statement

WHO AFRO 70th REGIONAL MEETING

Agenda item: 6 “Special event on the COVID-19 response in the WHO African Region”

IFPMA STATEMENT

Geneva, August 25, 2020

IFPMA thanks the WHO AFRO for this opportunity to share a statement at this 70th session of the WHO Regional meeting. IFPMA represents leading research-based biopharmaceutical companies and national and regional industry associations across the world, including Africa.

IFPMA believes that a well-coordinated, inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach and solidarity are the only possible solutions to help solve the COVID-19 global public health emergency. The private sector must be an equal partner in all coordination efforts. As WHO AFRO Director-General Dr Moeti said, “progress relies on an all-of-society approach, with solidarity between governments and the private sector, and communities”¹.

IFPMA reaffirms its commitment as an essential partner, in terms of investing in medicines and vaccines development and pursuing approaches to expand access, equal and fair distribution of drugs and vaccines globally. Since the early days of this pandemic, our industry has responded through many initiatives aimed at providing and prioritizing delivery of needed critical products to tackle COVID-19 while also addressing research and development of innovative health technologies including preventive tools, diagnostics, treatment, medicines, and vaccines, motivated by a strong sense of responsibility to act together, in partnership with WHO and governments, to support health systems across the world in a concerted and collective response.

Access to COVID-19 vaccines is a collective responsibility that calls for highly coordinated and collaborative action by public and private actors’ alike and global solidarity to solve the COVID-19 pandemic. IFPMA is a proud founding partner of the ACT-Accelerator and fully committed to the goals of the COVAX pillar to accelerate development, production, and equitable access to safe, quality effective COVID-19 vaccines, leaving no one behind. IFPMA supports initiatives such as ACT-A and ACTIV to ensure equitable access to products developed.

The Biopharmaceutical companies remain committed to working with governments, insurers, and other stakeholders to find solutions to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic at an unprecedented pace. The private R&D business model, enabled by sound intellectual property incentives, has significantly contributed to the treatments that are now being considered, and allowed companies to make investments at risk, in R&D to bring to market, new products.

¹ <https://www.afro.who.int/regional-director/speeches-messages/opening-statement-covid-19-press-conference-4-june-2020>



statement

IFPMA believes that the current pandemic calls for robust health systems, effective emergency preparedness, and investments in global health, all of which are critical. In particular, we are working to secure the continuity of supply for all essential medicines, and vaccines for patients with other life-threatening diseases, urging governments to implement policies and decisions that facilitate access for all those in need.

Strong regulatory systems on the continent are key to enable access to patients of safe, effective and high-quality medicines and vaccines. IFPMA members stands ready to work in close collaboration with national regulatory agencies, academia and global health stakeholders to maintain access to existing medicines and vaccines for treatment and prevention of other conditions, while also continuing clinical research into new options and cures for severe, life-threatening diseases. We also monitor the use of our medicines and vaccines with patients to safeguard and promote public health.

The unanimous decision in 2019 by Africa's political leaders at the African Union Assembly to adopt the treaty establishing the Africa Medicines Agency is a key turning point towards enhancing regulatory oversight across the continent and facilitating access to safe and affordable medicines. IFPMA acknowledges and supports the establishment of the AMA and urges all African countries to sign and ratify the treaty in a timely manner.