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Open letter from the innovative pharmaceutical industry to G20 Ministers in support of the advancement of the G20 Health Agenda

Dear Health Ministers of the G20,

As a global community, we continue to move through a period of great uncertainty, exacerbated by the impact of the pandemic, which continues to place immense pressure on economies and health systems everywhere. In this context, and with just over six years remaining until the 2030 deadline for the SDGs, important forums such as the G20 play a central role.

We are committed to working collaboratively with the G20 on the priorities identified by the G20 Health Working Group: *Health emergencies prevention, preparedness, and response (PPR) with a focus on One Health and antimicrobial resistance; Strengthening cooperation with the pharmaceutical sector with a focus on access and availability to safe, effective, quality vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics; and digital health innovation to aid universal health coverage (UHC) and improve service delivery.* The innovative pharmaceutical sector has expertise and critical insights across these three priorities.

Innovative pharmaceutical industry support for G20 health priorities

During the COVID-19 pandemic the innovative pharmaceutical industry rapidly mobilized. Vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics were developed at record speed and in historic quantities. Collaborative, voluntary partnerships, alongside a robust intellectual property system which enables innovative research and development as well as rapid manufacturing scale up, were essential. Any future approach must strengthen what worked well, apply lessons learned, and champion collaboration among partners as essential to improving equitable and quality access.

→ Equitable Access

Important challenges remain to improve equitable rollout of safe, effective, and quality vaccines, treatments, and diagnostics in pandemics. The industry has committed - via the [Berlin Declaration](#) - to draw on the lessons learned and has proposed an approach for more equitable pandemic preparedness and response. The Declaration, [supported by the Developing Countries Vaccines Manufacturers' Network \(DCVMN\)](#), sets out a clear commitment from the innovative pharmaceutical

industry to reserve real-time production for priority populations in lower-income countries and take measures to make them available and affordable. We welcome the G20 and other stakeholders to support this declaration, recognizing that to be successful, all stakeholders, including the innovative pharmaceutical industry, should work together to realize a more equitable future.

→ **Supply chains**

The pandemic demonstrated that timely access to medical countermeasures requires a strong, sustainable supply chain. Supply chains should be based on the expertise, strength, and management capacity of the private sector and supported by relevant institutions such as the WTO. Effective supply chains should be unincumbered by both upstream and downstream trade restrictions, which risk slowing the movement of essential goods and services and in turn endanger access. Open trade without restrictions and with expedited processes for import and export – especially for health products, and the inputs necessary for their production – are essential during an emergency.

→ **Antimicrobial resistance**

Alongside the risk of emerging pandemics, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) continues to be a pressing threat to global health. The innovative pharmaceutical industry remains a critical partner in helping to define and implement policies to prevent a future where no effective antibiotics remain. We firmly support the One Health approach in preventing and managing infectious disease across human, animal, and environmental health, and the collaborative approach of the Quadripartite¹. We continue to champion multi stakeholder platforms and have led the creation of visionary initiatives such as the AMR Industry Alliance and the AMR Action Fund.

→ **Digital health technologies**

Digital health technologies can bring transformative change to health care and support the delivery of UHC. They impact every aspect of the biopharmaceutical value chain, from drug discovery to support for patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals. Close voluntary collaboration and robust multi stakeholder partnerships are important in ensuring issues such as data privacy and security, access to data, and appropriate data flows are in line with existing regulations. We are members of the Digital Connected Care Coalition (DCCC), which brings together diverse stakeholders around the common goal of achieving UHC in lower-income countries by accelerating the digital transformation of healthcare.

¹ The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

→ Universal Health Coverage

UHC is the foundation of a resilient, sustainable global response to current and future health emergencies and is needed for healthy people, strong societies, and robust economies. The pandemic led to disruptions to essential health services in key areas, for example in non-communicable disease, reversing key gains made in global health outcomes. Life-course approaches to immunization strategies are a cost-effective means of improving health throughout adult life. Vaccination not only reduces the incidence and severity of infectious disease but can also reduce the incidence and severity of comorbidities with noncommunicable diseases.

Progress towards the realization of UHC can only be achieved through the meaningful collaboration of all players, including governments, the private sector, and non-governmental actors, and through sustained public spending in both communicable and non-communicable disease. The evidence here is clear: increased levels and efficient use of public spending leads to increased service coverage. Despite the current challenging economic outlook, countries must continue efforts to expand public investment in health systems, including utilizing public-private partnership mechanisms that support making health systems more equitable, sustainable, and resilient.

Proposals

The innovative pharmaceutical industry stands with the G20 and the global community to work toward developing practical solutions for a resilient post-pandemic world. Below, we identify **six key proposals** that are vital for the success of ongoing, shared efforts to build a securer, safer world for us all.

1. In the spirit of inclusivity, a One Health approach, and lessons learned from the pandemic, we encourage the G20 promote a multi stakeholder, multi sectoral approach to the discussions. **The private sector should be included as a critical partner, and the innovative pharmaceutical industry is ready and willing to work collaboratively with the G20 to contribute to working meetings (including, for example, Health Working Group meetings).**
2. Learning from the experiences of the pandemic, where too often the most vulnerable in our society were left behind, **we call upon the G20 to support the need for equitable access to safe, effective, and quality vaccines, treatments, and diagnostics as a core principle of health emergencies PPR.** Voluntary partnerships and a supportive intellectual property system will remain essential ingredients to sustain the rapid innovation and scale-up necessary to enable access. We also call on the G20 and other stakeholders to support the [Berlin Declaration](#), a practical framework to further improve the real-time delivery of vaccines, treatments, and diagnostics for priority populations in lower-income countries during future emergencies.

3. To ensure that there is no duplication and fragmentation, **we call on the G20 to work in coordination and collaboration with ongoing efforts, including with the formal negotiations of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body for the WHO CA+ and Working Group on Amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005).**
4. A further critical lesson from the pandemic was the need to ensure open trade without restrictions and expedited processes for the import and export of health products. **We encourage the G20 to ensure that future work to strengthen supply chains and logistics is driven by Member States and by the relevant institution, in this case the WTO, so procedures are structured and executed in a manner that facilitates the rapid, streamlined, uninterrupted supply not only during an emergency but also during periods in between emergencies.**
5. Given the rising burden of AMR and the long-standing commitment of the G20 to addressing this threat, **we encourage the G20 to prioritize the AMR response in the context of a One Health approach. This consists of driving collective efforts to improve AMR surveillance and stewardship practices, addressing Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), including increasing uptake of AMR-relevant vaccines, and supporting a pathway to enabling a healthy innovation ecosystem for antimicrobials.**
6. To ensure resilience in the face of future emergencies, countries must continue to prioritize UHC and increase and stabilize investments in health systems. Improvements must be made across the entire continuum of care, from awareness and screening to surveillance and follow-up. It is vital that countries have the technical and health infrastructure, human resources, financial capacity, and political support – also from the G20 – to successfully vaccinate, test, and provide care for their populations across the life-course, including in NCDs. **We encourage the G20 to advocate for robust, sustainable financing of strong, resilient, and equitable health systems.**

Conclusions

The innovative pharmaceutical industry welcomes the G20's commitment to strengthening health emergency PPR, cooperation, and digital health. To be successful, countries must ensure they invest in, build, and sustain the needed infrastructure, skilled workforce, and supportive policy and regulatory environment to successfully and safely absorb and deliver needed health products that are safe, effective, and of optimal quality. We all need to work together to shape a future where everyone is safe from the risk of public health threats, such as future health emergencies and AMR, and periods in between health emergencies. This multi-sectoral, multi stakeholder approach is required for a true One Health response.