



STATEMENT

Innovative pharmaceutical industry statement on draft WHO Pandemic Treaty: We need to preserve what went well and address what went wrong

17TH OCTOBER 2023, GENEVA – A draft of the World Health Organization (WHO) Intergovernmental Negotiating Body’s (INB) international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, commonly referred to as the Pandemic Accord or Treaty, has been circulated to member states.

As the body representing the global innovative pharmaceutical industry in official relations with the United Nations, IFPMA has issued the following statement in response. It warns that the current proposed text does not preserve what went well for this pandemic and will slow down efforts to improve equity by having a chilling effect on the innovation pipeline for medical countermeasures. As it stands now, the world would be better served with no agreement on the current, damaging treaty text. In short, no treaty is better than a bad treaty.

It is important that we rebuild the global health architecture to prepare and respond to future pandemics, informed by three key lessons from our response to COVID-19.

The first is that science delivered new vaccines and treatments at record speed, as a result of decades of investment in research and development, and enabled by an ecosystem that incentivised innovation and the rapid sharing of pathogen data. The second is that we must take robust and practical measures to address the inequity in access to these medical countermeasures that we saw in the roll out against COVID-19. The third is the power of partnerships and collaboration between academia, biotechs, large pharmaceutical companies and manufacturing companies to develop and scale up manufacturing of vaccines and treatments at a time of crisis.

The negotiating text of the WHO Pandemic Accord, which has been circulated to member states, makes it clear that these lessons have not been absorbed, would take us in the wrong direction, and result in us being less prepared for future pandemics than we were ahead of COVID-19. Instead of preserving what worked well in the successful fight against COVID-19 – the ability to innovate rapidly – and fix what needs to be fixed – the inequitable rollout -, the draft proposals for the treaty would compromise the innovation ecosystem and fails to come up with practical solution to addressing equity.

The current proposals are likely to delay access to the pathogens that scientists need to rapidly carry out research at the outbreak of a future pandemic. This delay will have a chilling effect on our ability to ensure vaccines and treatments can be rapidly available. The proposed treaty text would also lead to a weaker pipeline of vaccines and treatments for diseases with pandemic potential, as there will be a clear lack of incentives for pharmaceutical companies that were so vital to the development of new vaccines and treatments in response to COVID-19 at record speed and record scales, to invest in the research and development we will need.

If adopted in their current form, the proposals would effectively guarantee failure in meeting the 100 Days Mission target set out by the G7 in 2021.

The pharmaceutical industry [set out practical solutions](#) in the Berlin Declaration to address inequity in future pandemics, before a pandemic treaty was even proposed. These plans include a commitment from pharmaceutical companies, backed by biotech companies and developing country vaccine manufacturers, to reserve an allocation of real-time production of vaccines, treatments and diagnostics for priority populations in lower-income countries. We urge governments to refocus on such practical solutions and commit to establishing a new social contract that ensures we do not see a repeat of the export restrictions which hampered the roll out of COVID-19 vaccines, driving the inequity of access that we saw.

Urgent and significant revisions to the proposed treaty text are required, without which the world's future pandemic preparedness would be better served without a treaty rather than a bad treaty.

Accompanying quote

Commenting on the draft of the World Health Organization (WHO) Intergovernmental Negotiating Body's (INB) international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, commonly referred to as the Pandemic Accord, circulated to member states today, **IFPMA Director General, Thomas Cueni said:**

"It would be better to have no pandemic treaty than a bad pandemic treaty, which the draft circulated to member states clearly represents.

"We must ensure future pandemic preparedness is informed by lessons from COVID-19, preserve what worked well, the innovation ecosystem that made possible the development of vaccines and treatment at record speed and scale, and fix what needs to be fixed, the inequity we saw in the roll out of these vaccines and treatments.

"The ability of the private sector to develop new vaccines and treatments in response to COVID-19 was driven by decades of R&D investment supported by the intellectual property framework and the ability of scientists to rapidly access data on pathogens. If adopted, the draft treaty would undermine both and leave us weaker ahead of the next pandemic than we were in December 2019, and we urge governments to make significant revisions to the current text."