



STATEMENT

Sixth meeting of the open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG 6) on the WHO Pandemic Agreement: PABS instrument

23 MARCH 2026, GENEVA – On behalf of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA), we appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the Sixth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Pandemic Agreement.

The innovative pharmaceutical industry is a critical partner in pandemic preparedness and response, through sustained investments in R&D, surveillance, manufacturing capacity, and partnerships that have proven critical in past health emergencies. We have a track record of proactively responding to both pandemic emergencies and Public Health Emergencies of International Concern (PHEICs) and have proactively put forward commitments for both pandemic and interpandemic times in our IFPMA Equitable Access Statement¹.

In this context, we recognize that a well-designed Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing (PABS) system should advance global health security by facilitating rapid pathogen sharing and enabling effective response. We encourage the IGWG to preserve the balance secured in the Pandemic Agreement, in particular with regards to the set aside allocation, and focus on operationalizing it through a workable PABS.

At the same time, some of the proposals under discussion risk moving in the opposite direction. As currently proposed, the PABS Annex introduces overlapping and potentially conflicting obligations that could disincentivize research and slow innovation. Increased rigidity and complexity do not reflect the operational reality companies face and may undermine the agility required in a crisis. Predictability remains a central concern. Companies need clear, science-based definitions of scope, which should focus on pandemic emergencies. If inclusion depends on broad or evolving interpretations rather than precise parameters, it risks capturing routine research operation and creating uncertainty that could negatively impact R&D efforts.

Experience shows that voluntary, collaborative approaches deliver the strongest outcomes. PABS should support open scientific exchange, rather than condition access to pathogens on contractual arrangements that may limit collaboration. In this regard, treating pathogens as sovereign or

¹ [Delivering equitable access in pandemics: Biopharmaceutical industry commitments | IFPMA](#)

monetizable resources, or linking access to financial obligations, risks creating barriers to rapid sharing that are inconsistent with global health security objectives.

We also have serious concerns regarding proposals for mandatory monetary contributions. Such measures could act as a major disincentive to innovation in an already high-risk field, while overlooking the substantial non-monetary contributions industry already provides. We also caution against any language that limits intellectual property, which is a critical engine for the critically needed innovation.

We remain committed to constructive engagement to advance pandemic preparedness, support innovation, and deliver on shared global health objectives.