

STATEMENT

76th WHO Regional Committee for Africa: Special update on the ongoing Ebola virus disease outbreak caused by Bundibugyo Virus

26 AUGUST 2026, ADDIS ABABA – Marking the 100th day after the Bundibugyo outbreak was declared, the global pharmaceutical industry underscores its commitment and track record to tackling health emergencies.

Within a matter of days after the announcement of the outbreak, biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies mobilized alongside governments, Africa CDC, WHO, CEPI, Gavi, and other partners to develop new vaccines and therapeutics and explore cross-activity from existing ones for the current outbreak. This rapid response demonstrates the willingness of companies to voluntarily contribute to collective response efforts and the value of years of prior investment in science, platform technologies, partnerships, and preparedness.

As products advance in clinical trials, it will be important to focus on practical, tried, and tested approaches to get them to the people who need them. For past Ebola outbreaks, pharmaceutical companies have a well-established track record of working with governments, international organizations, and partners to ensure access to vaccines and therapeutics through a range of mechanisms tailored to outbreak needs, including stockpiles, compassionate use arrangements, donations, and other access pathways. These efforts have consistently been driven by public health needs and the shared objective of responding rapidly and effectively to outbreaks.

We see the outbreak as a “wake up call” for negotiators discussing the Pandemic Agreement’s Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing system (PABS). We caution, that some proposals under discussion could add complexity and cost to the response to future pandemics, and delay access to critical samples and information that scientific research relies on to develop and deliver medicines and vaccines. They will do nothing to strengthen the R&D pipeline to improve global preparedness and will likely lead to fewer companies working in these crucial areas of public health during the interpandemic period.

We call for the PABS system to strengthen the conditions that encourage company engagement in pandemic preparedness and response, including ensuring timely and open sharing of pathogens and data, legal certainty for researchers and manufacturers, predictable rules, and partnerships that allow science to move quickly.