IFPMA

STATEMENT

Statement on PABS Instrument at the ninth meeting of the Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG 9) on the WHO Pandemic Agreement

IFPMA appreciates the work undertaken to advance the PABS negotiations and the opportunity to comment on the documents before us.

At this important stage of the negotiations, we also recognize the importance of a strong and effective Bureau in guiding the process towards a workable outcome.

For the PABS system to work, it must secure the active participation of all the actors on which it depends, including laboratories, databases, and companies that will develop and manufacture pandemic products. The conditions governing participation are therefore critical. They should create trust, clarity, and incentives to participate.

We are concerned that some of the proposed requirements for laboratories and databases could become overly burdensome and, inadvertently, discourage participation in the very system we are trying to build. A PABS system cannot deliver rapid access and benefit sharing if key actors choose not to participate or face unnecessary barriers to doing so. Furthermore, proposed terms and conditions for databases and labs should not seek to transform laboratories and databases from scientific and public-health infrastructure into compliance mechanisms for future PABS obligations. Doing so risks hindering innovation addressing specific medical needs without improving equitable access.

The experience of Ebola, COVID-19, Mpox and other outbreaks demonstrates that companies have repeatedly contributed through voluntary collaboration, R&D investment, manufacturing scale-up, technology transfer, donations and not-for-profit supply arrangements, often in areas with limited or uncertain commercial returns. The PABS system should build on this willingness to contribute and enable companies to access the pathogen materials and information needed to begin R&D quickly, with clear, workable, and predictable conditions for participation.

As discussions advance across these interconnected elements, we encourage Member States to assess them against a simple test: will these arrangements encourage the broad participation needed for PABS to work effectively and rapidly when the next pandemic threat emerges?