



statement

16 March 2022

*Following reports on the status of informal discussions led by the WTO Secretariat with the European Union (EU), India, South Africa, and the USA, on 16 March 2022, **biopharmaceutical companies reaffirm their position that weakening patents now when it is widely acknowledged that there are no longer supply constraints of COVID-19 vaccines, sends the wrong signal.***

2022 kicked off with COVID-19 vaccine production from both developing and developed country manufacturers reaching 12 billion within a year of the first vaccine being authorized. Today industry is able to produce over a billion vaccine each month. COVAX is now fully meeting its commitments. Since the beginning of 2022, there has been broad consensus that the challenge now is how to get the vaccines into the arms of people who need them, rather than vaccine supply. When the IP TRIPS Waiver was first proposed in 2020, it was to the wrong solution to the problem of scaling up manufacturing of potential COVID-19 vaccines which at the time had not yet even been authorized. **Now the problem of supply has been addressed thanks to unprecedented collaboration involving companies from industrialized and developing countries, the TRIPS Waiver is not only the wrong solution, it is also an outdated proposal, that has been overtaken by events.**

Weakening intellectual property (IP) will do nothing to help the scaling up of vaccine manufacturing. There is a broad consensus among experts that waiving patents would not add a single additional vaccine dose, because technology transfer goes far beyond the patent, is built on trust, know-how sharing and voluntary licensing. This is exactly what manufacturers have done on an unprecedented scale. As of now, there are 371 collaborations on vaccines manufacturing and 155 for therapeutics and, in addition, the multiple announcements of partnerships to improve geographical diversity of vaccine production, are proof in themselves that **the proposed IP TRIPS waiver is unnecessary and irrelevant, at worst sends the wrong signal at the wrong time.**

The IP TRIPS Waiver proposals should be recognized for what they are – political posturing that are at best a distraction, at worse creating uncertainty that can undermine innovation's ability to respond to the current and future response to pandemics. **The current proposals should be shelved; and the focus should be directed, to admittedly more difficult actions that will change lives for the better:** supporting country readiness, contributing to equitable distribution, and driving innovation (Ref [Three priorities to urgently increase access to COVID-19 vaccines](#)).

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