



STATEMENT

Statement on PABS System at the second meeting of the open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG 2) on the WHO Pandemic Agreement

15 SEPTEMBER 2025, GENEVA – Our shared purpose is to help everyone be better prepared to prevent and respond to future pandemics. As the PABS System is developed, we must recognize the fragility of the pandemic innovation ecosystem, without which we risk the incentives to develop the medical countermeasures that make our goal possible. The System must preserve and support this vital innovation; excessive or unclear obligations would work against that objective.

Free and unhindered access to pathogens and their associated sequence information is fundamental to global health security. This openness—regardless of origin or intended use—must be preserved to maintain the agility of the research and innovation ecosystem.

Equally important is ensuring legal certainty for users of the PABS System. Avoiding the stacking of obligations from multiple multilateral instruments and national laws is critical. A complex legal maze would create disincentives for participation and hinder research and development efforts.

The scope of the PABS System must be clearly defined, focusing specifically on pathogens of pandemic potential. A well-articulated list of pathogens under scope is essential to ensure the system’s workability and alignment with its intended purpose.

Overly broad scope and/or triggers— such as extending pandemic emergency provisions to PHEICs and all relevant health products — risk undermining innovation. Such measures could disrupt market dynamics, discourage repurposing of existing products, and lead to premature manufacturing shifts, ultimately weakening preparedness and access.

Companies remain committed to equitable access to medical countermeasures. However, it is vital that they retain flexibility in how they fulfill these obligations reflecting their diverse expertise and capacities, and the specific nature of each future pandemic.

With regards to governance, the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPR) report noted that “WHO is and should be the lead health organization in the international system, but it cannot do everything”¹. The governance of the PABS system needs to be inclusive, with WHO having a central role as part of a partnership of all stakeholders, including industry.

A balanced, legally sound, and clearly scoped system will be necessary to enable global collaboration, innovation, and equitable access in future pandemic emergencies.