



STATEMENT

Statement at the 36th meeting of WIPO's Standing Committee on Patents: Patents and Health

16TH OCTOBER 2024

The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufactures and Associations (IFPMA) represents the leading research-based biopharmaceutical companies as well as national and regional industry associations around the world. We appreciate the opportunity to address the agenda item of patents and health.

Intellectual Property (IP) plays a pivotal role in the development of healthcare products and services. The IP system was the driving force behind the innovations that helped us address the COVID-19 pandemic in an unprecedented manner, and it continues to lay the foundation for future healthcare solutions. During the pandemic, the biopharmaceutical industry entered into more than 450 voluntary partnerships around the world to support an unprecedented scale-up in manufacturing. This allowed for the delivery of nearly 16 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines. The pandemic also highlighted several challenges, such as the urgent need to strengthen supply chains and regulatory frameworks, and to address trade restrictions. IP was not one of them.

Yet, we continue to hear calls to weaken IP rights and arguments suggesting they are potential barriers to R&D, public-private collaborations or access to healthcare.

With respect to the document SCP/36.6, there is little recognition of experiences from industry, academia, and governments to tackling the COVID-19 pandemic and other voluntary collaborations that were enabled by IP.

When the Secretariat was requested to update the report based on available literature and news reports, we believed this would be an opportunity to highlight the successful voluntary partnerships of our member companies with both governmental and non-governmental organizations as far-ranging as the World Health Organization (WHO); the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, the Medicines Patent Pool (MPP), and UNICEF, as well as the development of novel treatments and vaccines. We believe this opportunity was missed.

The updated report has also removed key sections of the earlier report, which included details of our members companies' commitment to not file or assert patents in low-income or least-developed countries; and to use differential pricing to address healthcare inequities. Notably, the report also fails to acknowledge [previous literature from WIPO](#), including the WIPO annual report from 2022, that estimated the social benefit of COVID Vaccines at USD 70.5 trillion, exceeding the private benefit by a factor of 887, showcasing the enormous value and positive impact that innovation, supported by the IP system, brings to global health and the economy.

IFPMA remains committed to working closely with WIPO, member states and other stakeholders to promote sustainable policies that encourage pharmaceutical innovation.