

## **A Declaration from Members of the World's Biotechnology Sector On Global Access to COVID Vaccines & Treatments and the Role of Intellectual Property**

We, the undersigned CEOs of global biotechnology companies and associations have a social responsibility to work with other stakeholders – healthcare providers, governments, multilateral organizations, and non-governmental donor organizations – to ensure that COVID vaccines and treatments get to the patients in the world who most need them. We are working hard to fulfill this responsibility.

- **Our sector must continue to play a constructive, proactive part in developing COVID solutions and the global manufacturing capacity to produce them.** In the past year, over 950 global R&D projects have been launched on COVID vaccines, treatments, and biologics, as companies have diverted efforts from other projects<sup>i</sup>. 70 percent of these projects are by small and medium sized companies<sup>ii</sup>. Over 250 global partnerships have been formed to build manufacturing capacity<sup>iii</sup>. And we are working hard to do more.
- **Intellectual property is the foundation of our sector.** It is responsible for creating the global biotech network that responded so quickly to the COVID crisis in the first place. It is what gives investors the confidence to fund companies with long time horizons and high risks. It gave companies the assurance that they could quickly pivot during the early days of the pandemic into COVID projects. And it helped ensure the type of global cooperation and partnerships that are driving companies, countries, and manufacturers to quickly scale up the production.
- **We support strong, collaborative efforts like those endorsed by the G-20<sup>iv</sup>** to address the global imbalances in access to COVID vaccines and treatments. Success will require national governments to address legislative or contractual impediments to supplying populations in need, especially in low- and middle- income countries. Bottlenecks and shortages in global supply chains for vaccine production need to be urgently addressed. And strained health-care systems in low-and middle-income countries need significant support to ensure vaccines get to people.
- **The proposed “waiver” of intellectual property rights proposed in the World Trade Organization (WTO) will be ineffective and counterproductive** in addressing this crisis. Intellectual property rights are *not* responsible for the imbalance in COVID vaccine supplies between higher and lower income countries. It will create a long contentious global negotiation that will not urgently address the crisis, and foster more “vaccine nationalism,” exacerbating shortages in an already strained global supply chain. It would divert limited resources from companies that are focused on maximizing current global partnerships while maintaining quality and patient safety. Lastly, it would send a powerful signal to the biotech sector and investors to avoid taking the risks to develop solutions in future public health emergencies.
- Current estimates are that existing **global vaccine manufacturers will produce more than 11 billion doses of COVID vaccines in 2021<sup>v</sup>**, and significantly more in the first part of 2022. We are committed to working with other global stakeholders to see that these doses get to those that most need them, wherever they may be.

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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> Biotechnology Innovation Organization, **COVID -19 Biotracker**, <https://www.bio.org/policy/human-health/vaccines-biodefense/coronavirus/pipeline-trackerink>

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> List of Global Vaccine Partnerships, [https://www.bio.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Industry\\_Partnerships\\_on\\_COVID\\_BIO.pdf](https://www.bio.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Industry_Partnerships_on_COVID_BIO.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> [https://global-health-summit.europa.eu/rome-declaration\\_en](https://global-health-summit.europa.eu/rome-declaration_en)

<sup>v</sup> [https://www.bio.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Airfinity\\_production.pdf](https://www.bio.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Airfinity_production.pdf)