

IFPMA Covid-19 Update - 16 April

Top news:

- The EU submitted a draft resolution to the World Health Assembly, according to [Knowledge Ecology International \(KEI\)](#) urging member states and groups like CEPI to “to achieve equitable access to quality, safe, and efficacious COVID-19 vaccines and other health technologies necessary for COVID-19 response.”
- Gates among bodies sharing messages of support for WHO in light of U.S. suspending funding. The WHO expressed concerns about COVID-19 disrupting the provision of essential health services and the fight against other priority diseases. Vaccination campaigns for polio have already been put on hold, and other vaccination programs are at risk because of border closures and disruptions to travel.
- Africa wants the G20 to go further in helping the world’s poorest countries survive the coronavirus crisis as they believe the debt relief until the end of 2020 is not sufficient.
- Israeli biopharmaceutical RedHill Biopharma administered their experimental drug, Opaganib, in Israel for the first time last week with positive results.
- Sanofi and Luminostics have signed an agreement to evaluate a collaboration on a smartphone-based self-testing solution for COVID-19.
- More than 1 million coronavirus tests will be rolled out in Africa from next week to address a gap in assessing the number of cases on the continent.

PRICING, ACCESS & IP

- **Politico (Paywall):** [EU Calls for WHA to discuss vaccine access](#). The EU submitted a draft resolution to the World Health Assembly, according to [Knowledge Ecology International \(KEI\)](#). The EU called for countries to “remove the existing barriers” on protective gear and medical devices, and calls for collaboration and investment on researching diagnostics, treatments and a vaccine against the disease. The EU also urges the WHA to draft a plan with member states and groups like CEPI to “to achieve equitable access to quality, safe, and efficacious COVID-19 vaccines and other health technologies necessary for COVID-19 response.”
- **FiercePharma:** [India, hoping to challenge Chinese dominance, plans API production](#). India has identified and prioritized production of 53 raw materials and active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) as part of its "China-plus-one" policy to fill in supply gaps of affordable medicines. The plan includes investing \$1.3 billion in domestic pharmaceutical producers and potentially reviving state-run companies to ramp up cheap generic production.

GLOBAL ECONOMIC & SOCIAL IMPACT

- **Politico:** [Africa to G20: Debt relief deal to ease coronavirus crisis not enough](#). Africa wants the G20 to go further in helping the world’s poorest countries survive the coronavirus crisis despite the group agreeing to suspend debt payments until the end of the year, officials said.
- **The East African:** [ILO gives grim global job loss over the next 90 days](#). The ILO estimates that 1.25 billion workers, representing almost 38% of the global workforce, are employed in sectors that are now facing a severe decline in output and a high risk of workforce displacement. The accommodation and food services sector is severely affected and it accounts for 144 million workers.
- **Reuters:** [Millions face hunger as African cities impose coronavirus lockdowns](#). Hunger and anger are building in Lagos and other major African cities with little or no social safety net

to protect the poor from the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. The WFP says at least 20% of Africa's 1.2 billion people are already undernourished. Under new restrictions in Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa, millions who once lived on daily wages are running out of food.

- **The New York Times:** [It's the end of the world economy as we know it](#). The world economy is an infinitely complicated web of interconnections. In the years ahead, we will learn what happens when that web is torn apart, when millions of those links are destroyed all at once. And it opens the possibility of a global economy completely different from the one that has prevailed in recent decades.
- **The Brussels Times:** [EU publishes roadmap to phase out coronavirus lockdowns](#). EU member states' approach to lifting their coronavirus lockdowns should be done in coordination with each other and be based on sufficient treatment, testing and tracing capacities, EU leaders said. The EU Commission and Council jointly published a roadmap aiming to guide member states as they begin looking at strategies to lift the containment measures aimed at halting the coronavirus pandemic.

SUPPORT FOR WHO

- **Euractiv:** [Gates Foundation calls for global cooperation on vaccine for 7 billion people](#). While it is likely to take as many as 18 months to develop and fully test a safe coronavirus vaccine, global authorities and businesses need to start now on plans to manufacture it, said foundation chief executive Mark Suzman. "It's normal to have, at maximum, hundreds of millions of doses manufactured," he said. "There are seven billion people on the planet," he said. "We are going to need to vaccinate nearly everyone. There is no manufacturing capacity to do that."
- **NCDAlliance:** [The NCD Alliance calls on governments to stand in solidarity with WHO to protect health for all](#) In light of threats to suspend funding for the World Health Organization (WHO), the NCD Alliance reiterates its support for the vital role of WHO in protecting people's health.

GLOBAL RESPONSE

- **NL Times:** [Netherlands contributes €50 million to international research for coronavirus vaccine](#). The Dutch government is contributing 50 million euros to international research into a vaccine for the coronavirus, Minister Hugo de Jonge of Public Health, Welfare and Sports announced in a letter to parliament. The amount will go to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), an organization that funds independent research into vaccines through donations, NU.nl reports. CEPI expects to need around 875 million dollars, or around 804 million euros, this year for research.
- **Time:** [South African President Cyril Ramaphosa: How countries in Africa are working together to Fight Coronavirus](#). South African president writes that African countries have decided to unite around a common continental response: "We are coordinating efforts among member states, African Union (A.U.) agencies and other multilateral organizations. Our response covers surveillance, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and control. African leaders have established an A.U. COVID-19 Response Fund. But given the formidable resource constraints faced by many African countries, we will need the support of the international community."
- **CNBC:** [Some countries in the Middle East are using artificial intelligence to fight the coronavirus pandemic](#). Countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council are stepping up their use of artificial intelligence tools to halt the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. By applying

location-based contact tracing, governments can monitor those who have tested positive for coronavirus, and try to limit their exposure to the population.

VACCINE/ TREATMENT DEVELOPMENT

Others

- **LiveMint:** [Six Indian companies working on coronavirus vaccine](#). Six Indian companies are working on a vaccine for COVID-19, joining global efforts to find a quick preventive for the deadly infection spreading rapidly across the world, says a top Indian scientist.
- **Independent:** [Coronavirus: Oxford University to begin human trials of Covid-19 vaccine next week](#). Oxford University scientists are to begin human trials of a potential coronavirus vaccine next week. Researchers said the vaccine could be ready to be rolled out for emergency use by the autumn following significant progress in the early stages of development. The Oxford team has tested the vaccine successfully on several animal species.
- **The Jerusalem Post:** [New Israeli COVID-19 treatment seemingly successful with first two patient](#). Israeli biopharmaceutical RedHill Biopharma Ltd. administered their experimental drug, Opaganib, in Israel for the first-time last week. The first two patients treated, according to the company, have demonstrated significant improvement through clinical trial within mere days of treatment.

Ethics

- **New York Times:** [Cutting corners for a coronavirus vaccines could cost lives](#). In the desperation to save lives in the coronavirus pandemic, we have already begun to relax scientific standards in the hope of finding a treatment without waiting to prove that it works. The WHO has funded a trial of new drug therapies that shockingly has [no placebo-control arm](#).
- **The Washington Post:** [Chaotic search for coronavirus treatments undermines efforts, experts say](#). In a desperate bid to find treatments for people sickened by the coronavirus, doctors and drug companies have launched more than 100 human experiments in the United States. Researchers working around-the-clock describe a lack of a centralized national strategy, overlapping efforts, an array of small-scale trials that will not lead to definitive answers and no standards for how to prioritize efforts, what data to collect or how to share it to get to answers faster.

NATIONAL RESPONSES – R&D and CLINICAL TRIALS

- **Euro News:** [Macron says controversial malaria drug will be tested for use as COVID-19 treatment](#). French President Emmanuel Macron called for a controversial dual therapy based on hydroxychloroquine to be tested as soon as possible. The therapy proposed by Professor Didier Raoult, whom he visited at the Marseille University hospital last week, "has been authorised by the competent authorities" and that it now "must be tested" to show "the effectiveness and measure the toxicity".
- **New York Post:** [Cuomo offers up New York as coronavirus vaccine 'laboratory'](#). Gov. Andrew Cuomo offered up New York as a "laboratory" for testing of possible coronavirus vaccines, as another 752 residents succumbed to the bug. Cuomo said the state Health Department stands ready to work with the federal Food and Drug Administration — and that New Yorkers would make perfect test subjects.
- **CNN:** [Italy aims to turn suffering to advantage with experimental COVID-19 treatments](#). The country is pinning its hopes on using the blood plasma of Covid-19 survivors to help those who are suffering most from it in hospitals now.

FAKE COVID-19 PRODUCTS

- **The Guardian:** [As coronavirus spreads around the world, so too do the quack cures](#). As the global pandemic has worsened, politicians, faith leaders and other authority figures from around the world have touted unscientific methods to tackle its spread. There are already countless coronavirus-related quack cures, dubious prophylactic schemes or conspiracy theories circulating on social media. At best these are unproven, at worst some may even exacerbate the spread of coronavirus.

DIAGNOSTICS

- **Sanofi:** [Sanofi and Luminostics to join forces on developing breakthrough COVID-19 smartphone-based self-testing solution](#). Sanofi and Luminostics have signed an agreement to evaluate a collaboration on a unique self-testing solution for COVID-19, using Luminostics' innovative technology, and further adding to Sanofi's ongoing efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic on multiple fronts.
- **The Guardian:** [1 million tests to be rolled out across Africa, as WHO warns over Europe Situation](#). More than 1m coronavirus tests will be rolled out in Africa from next week to address a gap in assessing the number of cases on the continent, the head of the African Union's health body has said.

DISEASE CHARACTERISTICS

- **New York Times:** [The coronavirus is mutating. What does that mean for a vaccine?](#) Like all viruses, SARS-CoV-2 is mutating as it passes from person to person. Most mutations don't really change how the virus functions. Vaccines work by prompting the body to develop antibodies, which neutralize the virus by binding to it in a very specific way. Scientists are watching to see if mutations will affect this interaction. If they don't, then there is hope that a vaccine won't need constant updating.

WHO – Daily COVID-19 update, 16 April

[Director-General's opening remarks at the mission briefing 16.04.2020](#)

- The WHO is concerned by some reports in the media about violence erupting as a result of physical distancing restrictions.
- The pandemic is also disrupting the provision of essential health services and hampering our fight against other priority diseases. Vaccination campaigns for polio have already been put on hold, and other vaccination programs are at risk because of border closures and disruptions to travel.
- The WFP estimates it will need approximately US\$280 million, simply to cover the costs of storing and moving supplies. The costs of procuring supplies will be much greater.

[WHO AFRO press briefing](#) (with IFRC Africa and WEF)

- Dr Moeti, Regional Director, states that the WHO is working with the World Food Programme, The Ma Foundation and the Government of Ethiopia to begin "solidarity flights" transporting essential supplies and equipment to countries, including enough personal protective equipment for health workers can safely treat 30,000 patients."
- Dr Moeti clarified that while it is not possible for police to enforce people to stay indoors in unfeasible circumstances, the idea all together should not be given up on.

WHO EURO press briefing

- Hans Kluge, Regional Director, states that solidarity is key between health authorities as we remain in the eye of the storm. He emphasised, any steps to transition towards 'a new normal' must be guided by public health principles, together with economic and societal considerations.

NEW WHO RESOURCES

[Practical considerations and recommendations for Religious Leaders and Faith-based Communities in the context of COVID-19](#). This document provides practical guidance and recommendations to support the special role of religious leaders, faith-based organizations, and faith communities in COVID-19 education, preparedness, and response.

EUROPE MANUFACTURING & SUPPLY OF MEDICINES

- **EuroNews:** [Coronavirus in Europe: Scramble for face masks and medical supplies sends prices soaring](#). Unifarm, one of the main distributors of pharmaceutical products in Romania, said orders were falling through because other buyers were making better offers. Now Romania is the first EU country to host a Brussels-funded stockpile of medical supplies, which will then be distributed to other member countries.
- **EU Commission:** [Guidelines on the optimal and rational supply of medicines to avoid shortages during the COVID-19 outbreak](#). Member States are expected to protect public health in a spirit of European solidarity. (1) In order to achieve this objective, it is critically important that Member States lift export bans on medicines within the internal market; (2) In addition, preventive stockpiling by Member States puts supply at risk for all countries; (3) To prevent panic buying or irrational consumption by citizens and excessive purchasing by wholesalers and pharmacists, national authorities should ensure that supply chain actors have access to reliable information on the use of medicines in the context of COVID-19.