

Top news:

- WHO and Costa Rica's president announced that the official call to action to join the voluntary patent pool for COVID-19 medical tools will be launched on 29 May.
- India asks G20 nations to ensure access to essential medicines, treatments and vaccines at affordable prices.
- Sanofi announced there will be no particular advance given to any country when it comes to the distribution of its vaccine.
- Takeda may aim to enter the COVID-19 vaccine race but warns industry of the difficulties of developing and manufacturing such products.
- Two policy briefs by the ILO highlight how COVID-19 has exposed gaps in social protection coverage in LMICs which could compromise recovery plans, increase global poverty and affect global preparedness to cope with similar crises.
- Later tonight, WHO will release a scientific brief on multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children which could be linked to COVID-19.

WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

- **HPW:** [WHO Member States Agree On Draft Resolution For COVID-19 Response.](#)
Before the upcoming WHA, WHO member states reached an initial agreement on Thursday on an EU-led [draft resolution](#) on a global COVID-19 response. After a "silence period" in which any of the 194 member states could raise formal objections expired at noon yesterday, informal negotiations reportedly continued in an attempt to bridge differences. However, the final draft text remained intact and diplomatic observers said that any further issues will be aired on the floor of the WHA plenary next week.
- **VOA:** [Taiwan Dispute Spotlights Political Challenges Ahead of WHO Meeting.](#) The U.S. State Department urged WHO Director-General Tedros to invite Taiwan as an observer to the WHA, despite China's objections, emphasizing that Taiwan's inclusion is consistent with all U.N. and WHO resolutions.
- The WHA 73 list of participants will be posted here on Sunday 17 May, in the evening: <https://www.who.int/about/governance/world-health-assembly/seventy-third-world-health-assembly>

IP, PRICING & ACCESS

- **ZeeNews:** [India asks G-20 nations to ensure access to essential medicines, treatments and vaccines at affordable prices, amid coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.](#) India has called upon the G-20 nations to ensure access to essential medicines, treatments and vaccines at affordable prices, amid the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.
- **European Views:** [Sanofi Backtracks on 'US First to Get Coronavirus Vaccine' Comments after Outraging France.](#) Sanofi's CEO Serge Weinberg, chairman of the company, said that "there will be no particular advance given to any country". We are organized with several manufacturing units. Some of them are in the US but even more of them are in Europe and France," Weinberg said.
- **BBC News:** [The race to develop a vaccine.](#) Ellen t'Hoen among others are discussing universal availability of medicines and vaccines as global public goods to tackle the COVID-

19 crisis. She said, “we must ensure that there are strings attached to public financing of vaccine development to ensure that the results of the research can be pooled”.

- **Bloomberg:** [The COVID-19 Vaccine Fight Is Getting Ugly](#). In an op-ed by Lionel Laurent who is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering Brussels, he writes (following the remarks by the Sanofi CEO), it would be more productive if European countries backed up their indignation by working together to take on the financial risk of vaccines. Then they could divide the spoils more equally.
- **European Commission:** [INTA Committee sends a letter to Commissioner Hogan on compulsory licensing](#). MEP Bernd Lange (S&D, Germany), who is the Chair of the Committee on International Trade, sent a letter on behalf of the INTA committee, to the Trade Commissioner asking the EU Commission to outline what impact the EU’s existing free trade agreement and the TRIPS Agreement will have on the eventual global availability of a vaccine, notably in the context of possible compulsory licensing.

SUPPLY & MANUFACTURING

- **Science Business:** [Commission to launch €50M Horizon call to help industry repurpose manufacturing capabilities in time of crisis](#). The EU Commission is releasing €50 million from the Horizon 2020 research budget to help the manufacturing sector repurpose production lines faster and is preparing a call worth €20 million dedicated exclusively to switching existing lines over to the manufacture of medical equipment, vaccines and diagnostics.
- **EuroNews:** [EU wants funds for 'stronger defence policy' amid coronavirus threat](#). The EU has launched a "task force" to mobilise national armies to transport patients and medical supplies from one country to another within the bloc.
- **France 24:** [COVID-19 forces France to look at relocating its pharmaceutical industry](#). COVID-19 has uncovered weaknesses in France’s pharmaceutical sector. With 80% of medicines manufactured in Asia, France remains highly dependent on China and India. Entrepreneurs are now determined to bring France’s laboratories back to Europe.

GLOBAL RESPONSE

- **Financial Times:** [What is the impact of the coronavirus pandemic? Global experts answer the big questions](#). Bill Gates, UN Women and others share their views about the impact of COVID-19 and how policymakers should respond.
- **Arab News:** [South Korea, China, Japan to hold video meeting on coronavirus](#). The health ministers of South Korea, China and Japan will get together by video conference on Friday to discuss ways to work together in the global campaign against the novel coronavirus, South Korean officials said.

GLOBAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

- **The Jakarta Post:** [G20 vows to avoid 'unnecessary' trade barriers](#). The G20 pledged to avoid "unnecessary" trade barriers on essential goods including food during the coronavirus pandemic, after the WTO and IMF warned over the growing use of export restrictions.
- **BBC News:** [Coronavirus 'could cost global economy \\$8.8tn' says ADB](#). The coronavirus pandemic could cost the global economy between \$5.8tn and \$8.8tn (£4.7tn-£7.1tn), according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), more than double its earlier estimates as containment measures paralyse economies.

- **Financial Times:** [Fund managers pile into \\$65bn COVID-19 bond market](#). A new coronavirus bond market has reached \$65bn in just a few months and is set to keep growing, as companies and governments rush to issue debt to help ease the effects of the pandemic.
- **BBC News:** [The impact of coronavirus on Africa's economy](#). IMF predicts that Africa's economy will contract by 1.5 percentage points in 2020 - a loss of around \$200bn (£163.5bn) in income for the region.
- **European Parliament News:** [EU27 need €2 trillion recovery package to tackle COVID-19 fallout](#). In a resolution on the post-2020 EU budget revision and economic recovery plans, MEPs demand a robust package, focused on citizens' needs and building on the EU budget.

GLOBAL HEALTH/ SOCIAL IMPACT

- **UN News:** [Access to healthcare, now 'a matter of life and death'](#). The spread of COVID-19 in developing countries has exposed gaps in social protection coverage which could compromise recovery plans, expose millions of people to poverty and affect global readiness to cope with similar crises, according to [two policy briefs](#) issued by the ILO.
- **Help Age International:** [Elderly people are among the most physically and financially vulnerable to COVID-19, but their needs are too often ignored](#). Lockdowns in rich countries around the world have caused economic disruption to many, especially the poorest populations, but for older people living in low-income countries, they can be a matter of life and death.
- **IOM:** [Mental Health Needs of Migrants and Displaced Persons Must Be Part of COVID-19 Response](#). IOM calls for pro-active measures to be taken by governments worldwide to ensure that the mental health and psychosocial needs of migrants and displaced persons are taken into consideration in governments' responses.

TREATMENT & VACCINE DEVELOPMENT

IFPMA members

- **BioProcess International:** [Takeda warns of failures and bottlenecks in COVID vaccine rush](#). Takeda says it is looking to partner to enter the COVID-19 vaccine race but warns industry of the difficulties of developing and manufacturing such products.
- **Outbreak Today:** [Hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin to treat COVID-19 clinical trial begins](#). A clinical trial has begun to evaluate whether the malaria drug hydroxychloroquine, given together with the antibiotic azithromycin, can prevent hospitalization and death from COVID-19.

Others

- **The Guardian:** [UK spent £20m buying up stocks of HIV and malaria drugs](#). The UK government has spent nearly £20m and has entered 16 contracts for chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine, and chloroquine phosphate used for malaria and other diseases and placed major orders for lopinavir-ritonavir.
- **BBC News:** [Macaque monkey trial offers hope](#). A trial took place in the US, involving researchers from the US government's National Institutes of Health (NIH) and from the University of Oxford found that a vaccine against coronavirus appears to have provided protection against the disease COVID-19 in six rhesus macaque monkeys.
- **Economic Times:** [Russia inches closer to create drug to treat COVID-19](#). Russia's sovereign wealth fund, and top pharmacy group from Russia ChemRar Group announced first and positive interim results of the multicenter randomized open comparative clinical trial of the drug Favipiravir on patients hospitalized with COVID-19.

- **The Motley Fool:** [Is Inovio Gaining Ground in the Coronavirus Vaccine Race?](#) Inovio has recently completed enrolment in a phase one trial and it is a step behind Moderna on the coronavirus vaccine timeline.
- **Bloomberg:** [Tobacco-Based Coronavirus Vaccine Poised for Human Tests.](#) An experimental COVID-19 vaccine developed by cigarette maker British American Tobacco Plc is poised to begin testing in humans. Pre-clinical tests of the vaccine showed a positive immune response.
- **The Hindu:** [No link between BCG vaccination, coronavirus in Israel.](#) Researchers in Israel did not find any key difference in proportion of positive test results in vaccinated, unvaccinated groups of the BCG vaccine.

New Partnerships

- **XinhuaNet:** [Israeli university, Swiss firm team up to advance COVID-19 vaccine.](#) Israel's Tel Aviv University and Neovii, a Swiss-based biopharmaceutical company, announced that they have signed an agreement to advance a patent-based COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Reuters:** [Dutch researchers: in talks to develop antibody treatment for coronavirus.](#) Researchers from Utrecht University said they are in talks with major pharmaceutical manufacturers on developing an antibody treatment for the new coronavirus.

DONATIONS

- **Takeda:** [Guided by Our Values: Supporting Global COVID-19 Response.](#) Takeda will donate a total of JPY 2.5 billion (USD 23 million*) across three UN-led organizations to strengthen health systems, improve access to care and supplies, and address food insecurity.

DIAGNOSTICS

- **CNBC:** [FDA issues warning on accuracy of Abbott's rapid coronavirus test after study finds false negatives.](#) The U.S. FDA issued an alert saying there is early data that suggests Abbott Labs' rapid coronavirus diagnostic test for COVID-19 may be delivering inaccurate results.

CLINICAL TRIALS

- **Politico (Paywall):** [EMA warns about too-small studies for COVID-19 medicines.](#) The agency called on countries to cooperate in order to conduct the kind of large-scale trials needed to verify the efficacy of potential treatments and vaccines against COVID-19.
- **Fortune:** [Will COVID-19 change how Big Pharma does clinical trials?](#) A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial has long been considered the gold standard in medicine, but it's not easy to pull off in the middle of a pandemic and this may change how clinical trials are designed moving forward.

EPIDEMIOLOGY

- **RaillyNews:** [Kidney Failure in One-Third of Those Undergoing Coronavirus Treatment.](#) A study found that more than a third of patients treated for the Corona virus in New York, suffered from kidney failure. It was stated that 15 percent of these people were bound to dialysis.

CORONAVIRUS & AFRICA

- **The Guardian:** [Africa facing a quarter of a billion coronavirus cases, WHO predicts.](#) Nearly a quarter of a billion people across 47 African countries will catch coronavirus over the

next year, but the result will be fewer severe cases and deaths than in the US and Europe, new research predicts.

GEOPOLITICS

- **FT:** [Trump threatens to cut off relations with China](#). Donald Trump has warned that he could “cut off the whole relationship” with China, in the latest escalation of US tensions with Beijing as he increasingly blames China for the global spread of the coronavirus.

WHO - COVID-19 UPDATE, 15 May

Statement by Dr Tedros during today’s media briefing [here](#).

- We are seeing some good examples where companies are coming out with solidarity approaches – from open licensing and support, to tech transfer via the new Tech Access Partnership, to commitments not to increase prices in times of shortages.
- WHO recognizes the wide-ranging efforts and initiatives aimed at incentivizing innovation while also ensuring access for all. These will be important topics next week at the World Health Assembly.
- Yesterday, WHO released a [policy brief on gender and COVID-19](#), which encourages countries to incorporate a gender focus into their responses.
- This evening, WHO will release a Scientific Brief on Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children.
- In the past weeks, reports from Europe and North America have described a small number of children being admitted to intensive care units with a multisystem inflammatory condition with some features similar to Kawasaki’s disease and toxic shock syndrome.
- Initial reports hypothesise that this syndrome may be related to COVID-19.

Statement by Costa Rica’s President Alvarado during [WHO’s media briefing](#):

- Costa Rica proposed to create a global repository of IP with data, knowledge, tech, and design of COVID-19
- The idea is to make this repository with advancement and innovation available at the lowest cost to ensure it can be available to everyone
- This would be done on a voluntary basis as we need solidarity more than ever.
- Over the past two months, so much knowledge and science has been developed and we need to pool this together.
- Understanding that this pandemic affects all countries the same regardless if you have resources
- This is a call to action for creating a repository and global pool for rights to make the development more accessible and available for all so the world together
- Call is for member states, private sector, academic, research institution and corporation institutions on a voluntary basis
- All of this should be a global public good to protect the world from this pandemic
- The official call to action will be launched on May 29th and they are still waiting for more member states to join
- Only with multilateralism can we overcome COVID-19, not with nationalism and selfishness
- This is a great opportunity to show the best of humanity

WHO: [DRAFT landscape of COVID-19 candidate vaccines – 15 May 2020](#).

- 8 candidate vaccines in clinical evaluation

110 candidate vaccines in preclinical evaluation