

Top news:

- Top level executives from GSK, Pfizer, AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson came together in an IFPMA-hosted virtual press briefing highlighting their progress in developing a COVID-19 vaccine, pledging to supply a successful vaccine on a not-for-profit basis, discussing their efforts to boost production capacity, and stressing challenges for clinical trials now that the virus is slowing down in the Northern hemisphere.
- The EU Commission launched a new campaign with the international advocacy organisation Global Citizen, "Global Goal: Unite For Our Future", that will culminate in a Global Pledging Summit on Saturday 27 June.
- Today, Justin Trudeau is co-hosting a four-hour virtual conference with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness to work out a co-ordinated global response to mitigate the socio-economic impacts COVID-19.
- GSK announced it will be able to produce 1 billion doses of its potential COVID-19 vaccine candidate & AstraZeneca signed new deal with Oxford's BioMedica to boost production capacity.
- Novartis joined the vaccine race by partnering with Massachusetts Eye and Ear Hospital.

R&D FOR COVID-19 VACCINE

- **IFPMA:** [Pharma partners in efforts to give coronavirus vaccine for everyone](#). IFPMA updated the world's media on the biopharmaceutical industry's unprecedented efforts, many of them in collaboration with others, to speed up research and development for a new COVID-19 vaccine. Representatives from Pfizer, GSK, AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson, and IFPMA DG Thomas Cueni, also highlighted that plans are underway to scale up manufacturing at risk even though it is not sure yet which, if any, vaccines in development will be found to be safe and effective. Full press briefing [here](#). IFPMA Policy Principles on COVID-19 Vaccines Initiative can be found [here](#).
- **NZZ (original in German):** [The pharmaceutical industry is running out of time in developing a vaccine against Covid-19](#). With the virus already retreating in much of the northern hemisphere, the article raises questions the decision of initiating clinical tests in Europe or in North America - because to ensure that a vaccine works, the vaccinated person must also be exposed to a certain risk of infection. The pharmaceutical industry is already considering "moving its clinical tests south", as the heads of several leading pharma companies said.
- **LiveMint:** [Global firms pledge to not profit from covid-19 vaccines till pandemic ends](#). Global manufacturers AstraZeneca, GSK, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson pledged to supply covid-19 vaccines on a no-profit basis so as to improve access to any successful candidate when it is available in the market.

SUPPLY & MANUFACTURING

- **Bio Pharma Dive:** [Coronavirus vaccine developers plan to enroll tens of thousands in late-stage tests](#). Whereas previously trial phases would be staggered over multiple years, developers and regulators are compressing typical development timelines to allow vaccine candidates to quickly move into evaluations across larger groups of people. The accelerated approach is necessary to potentially have a vaccine within 12 to 18 months. AstraZeneca plans to start its 30,000-person Phase 3 trial in July. Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla,

speaking on a conference call hosted by IFPMA, said the company is planning for a study of its vaccine candidate that would enroll 20,000 or 30,000 participants. J&J is anticipating running two "large" Phase 3 trials, the company's chief scientific officer Paul Stoffels said on the call.

- **Financial Times:** [GSK to produce 1bn doses of coronavirus vaccine booster](#). GSK has said it will produce 1bn doses of a vaccine booster as it steps up its preparations for an eventual immunisation for coronavirus.
- **Fierce Pharma:** [AstraZeneca locks up COVID-19 vaccine supply with Oxford BioMedica production deal](#). AstraZeneca and Oxford BioMedica inked a one-year deal covering "multiple batches" of the University of Oxford's adenovirus-based COVID-19 vaccine candidate, AZD1222, as part of a consortium aimed at speeding production of the shot.

IP, PRICING & ACCESS

- **MSF:** [No patents or profiteering in a pandemic](#). MSF Access Campaign called on pharmaceutical and diagnostic companies to commit to not seek nor enforce patents on any tests, medicines or vaccines for COVID-19. They also called upon the governments to not grant any patents related to COVID-19 and also to override existing patents.
- **MSF:** [Letter to Brazilian parliament on compulsory licenses for COVID-19 medical tools](#). MSF Access Campaign wrote a letter to the Brazilian parliament to express support of the initiative undertaken by Brazil through bill #1462/2020 that accelerates compulsory licenses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The letter said that adapting compulsory licensing laws to be more expedited and automatic during the pandemic will strengthen countries' capacity to respond more effectively, both at the national level and through international collaborations.
- **EU Observer:** [Why developing countries may be last to get the vaccine](#). Inequality in vaccine coverage between rich and poor countries is stark. "There's no way we will produce five billion doses of a new vaccine within a month, so there is going to be staggered production", according to Kalipso Chalkidou, Director of global health policy, Center for Global Development.
- **The Lancet:** [Balancing the needs of LMICs during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). A surge in demand, price competition, and foreign diplomacy could concentrate hydroxychloroquine in the hands of a few select high-income countries. Stocks of this inexpensive medication should be earmarked for patients with autoimmune diseases living in LMICs.

GLOBAL FUNDING EFFORTS

- **EU Commission:** [Coronavirus Global Response: kick off of new campaign with support of Global Citizen](#). The pledging marathon that started on 4 May will now see the launch of a new campaign with the international advocacy organisation Global Citizen, "Global Goal: Unite For Our Future", that will culminate in a Global Pledging Summit on Saturday 27 June. This is a new stretch in raising support for the ACT-Accelerator, launched by the WHO with governments and partners at the end of April. Full video of announcement [here](#); and press statement by Commission president Ursula von der Leyen [here](#).
- **Global Citizen:** [New Zealand Pledges \\$37 Million to Global COVID-19 Vaccine Search](#). Up to \$15 million has been allocated for global research efforts, including projects overseen by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). A further \$7 million will go toward Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which works to distribute vaccines and provide critical health care to low-income countries.

POST-COVID-19 RECOVERY

Global

- **CTV:** [Trudeau co-hosts UN summit to develop global pandemic recovery plan](#). Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will co-host today a four-hour virtual conference with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness aimed at developing a co-ordinated global response to mitigate the devastating social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Europe

- **Bloomberg:** [Europe's \\$826 Billion Recovery Fund Will Have Strings Attached](#). The European Union's top economic officials warned that the bloc's 750 billion-euro (\$826 billion) recovery package won't give countries blank checks, as grants and loans will be conditional on the implementation of reforms and will have to focus on the region's green and digital priorities.
- **EU Commission:** [EU budget for recovery: Commission proposes new Health Programme EU4Health with a budget of €9.4 billion](#). The Commission has proposed a new, ambitious stand-alone health programme for the 2021-2027 period – the EU4Health Programme. EU4Health will make a significant contribution to the post-COVID-19 recovery by making the EU population healthier, improving the resilience of health systems, and promoting innovation in the health sector.

VACCINE DEVELOPMENT

IFPMA members

- **Biopharma Dive:** [Novartis teams with Mass. Eye & Ear to join coronavirus vaccine chase](#). Novartis' AveXis division will manufacture a coronavirus vaccine being developed by Massachusetts Eye and Ear Hospital, allowing the academic institution to take advantage of the technology that has delivered the gene therapy Zolgensma to spinal muscular atrophy patients. The hospital expects to begin a Phase 1 trial in humans in the second half of 2020.

Other

- **Fierce Pharma:** [Want COVID-19 herd immunity? Get 40% of population vaccinated, says ex-FDA chief Gottlieb](#). Former FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb has a rough estimate for the number of vaccinated people to reach herd immunity for COVID-19. Because about 20% of people may have already been infected by the time a COVID-19 vaccine is launched, "we'd need to get perhaps 40% utilization to achieve herd immunity," he said.

TREATMENT DEVELOPMENT & REPURPOSED DRUGS

IFPMA members

- **The Guardian:** [Roche mixes Actemra with Gilead's remdesivir in COVID-19 trial](#). Roche plans to test if mixing its anti-inflammation drug Actemra with Gilead's remdesivir works better against severe COVID-19 pneumonia than remdesivir alone.
- **Pharmacy Times:** [Study Finds First COVID-19 Treatment That Significantly Improves Survival](#). A study released today by Hackensack Meridian Health has shown that tocilizumab significantly improved outcomes for patients with COVID-19. Once confirmed, tocilizumab would be the first approved medication that improves survival for patients with COVID-19, according to the study.

Hydroxychloroquine

- **The Guardian:** [Questions raised over hydroxychloroquine study which caused WHO to halt trials for Covid-19](#). Questions have been raised by Australian infectious disease researchers about a [study](#) which found that patients who received the malaria drug were

dying at higher rates than other virus patients and which prompted the WHO to halt global trials of the drug hydroxychloroquine to treat Covid-19.

Other

- **STAT News:** [A biotech company tries to retrofit a lung drug to prevent Covid-19's after effects](#). Many Covid-19 survivors will have long-term lung injuries, and medicine has little to offer them. PureTech Health, a biotech company in Boston, believes it might have a solution after making some chemical alterations to an older drug that has helped prevent scarring in a different lung disease.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

- **Euro News:** [COVID-19 creating 'lockdown generation' as young workers take the biggest hit](#). The COVID-19 pandemic is having a "devastating and disproportionate" impact on youth employment worldwide with more than one in six young people forced to stop working since the outbreak began, the [International Labour Organisation](#) (ILO) has highlighted.

GLOBAL HEALTH IMPACT

- **UNDP:** [Coronavirus could mean millions go hungry](#). Unfortunately, 2020 humanitarian assistance funding has plummeted and much-needed funding for COVID-19 is being diverted from existing programmes, this will have long term ramifications for years to come.
- **WFP:** [Coronavirus puts 14 million people at risk of missing meals in Latin America and the Caribbean](#). The WFP estimates that the number of people experiencing severe food insecurity could quadruple from the current 3.4 million to 13.7 million in 2020. The forecasted contraction of the regional economy - estimated by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at -5.3 percent - will likely hit hardest those who rely on daily earnings from jobs in the informal sector.

DONATIONS

- **Fierce Pharma:** [Roche's Genentech dials up new round of COVID-19 charitable giving](#). As COVID-19 continues to hammer communities, Roche's Genentech is committing another \$42 million in charitable donations as it moves into a second phase of giving. Genentech's latest donation adds to the large sum of funds pledged by Big Pharma.

WHO - COVID-19 Daily Briefing , 28 May

No WHO HQ press briefing today.

WHO EURO COVID-19 [Press Briefing](#):

- Dr Hans Kluge, Regional Director of the WHO Euro region said that in response to countries easing lockdown measures, there is no economy without people. There can be no economic recovery without COVID-19 transmission under control.
- Dr Kluge shares three key takeaway messages that countries must recognize:
 - Controlling the virus and economic recovery go hand-in-hand
 - COVID-19 impacts all, but some more than others – we cannot afford to leave anyone behind.
 - We can build back better – a different economy that is more equal and inclusive.

- The WHO is concerned that countries will respond to this crisis in the same way they did to the recession 10 years ago. Many countries in Europe responded to that crisis by cutting public spending on health.
- Countries must prioritize investing in health, invest in social protection and, above all, avoid austerity, which has devastated the lives of so many in Europe.

WHO AFRO COVID-19 [Press Briefing](#) with WEF:

- Dr Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa, highlighted that access to test kits, & therefore the rate of testing, is one of the biggest challenges countries in the Region are facing at the moment.
- Overall our observation, we are seeing more people dying in the older age groups, though we are seeing a larger population of cases among those who are younger.
- It was been 3 months that the first case was detected on the African continent. Since then, Dr Moeti shared that the WHO trained more than 10,000 health workers in Africa, as part of the decentralization of the response, in areas such as infection prevention & control, case management, logistics & psychosocial support.
- It took 36 days to reach 1000 cases, but only 62 cases to reach 100,000. Compared to two weeks ago, reported cases have tripled in five countries and doubled in 10 countries.