

Top news:

- The Medicines Patent Pool and Unitaid respond to access efforts for COVID-19 treatments and technologies. 140 NGOs Open Letter to WIPO: Intellectual Property and COVID-19
- Bill Gates is plugging money into building factories for seven promising coronavirus vaccines.
- The WHO calls for more African nations to participate in its SOLIDARITY trial. So far, the only African country to have formally joined the trial is South Africa. Senegal and Burkina Faso — which have some of the most COVID-19 cases in the continent — are in the process of being enrolled.
- WHO's Solidarity Response Fund has now raised more than US\$127 million from more than 219,000 individuals and organizations.
- The World Bank Group is prepared to deploy up to \$160 billion over the next 15 months to support COVID-19 measures that will help countries respond to immediate health consequences of the pandemic and bolster economic recovery.
- Novartis today announced plans to initiate a Phase III clinical trial in collaboration with Incyte to evaluate the use of Jakavi® (ruxolitinib) for treating patients with COVID-19 & Sanofi SA will be able to provide millions of doses of hydroxychloroquine for patients with the illness caused by the novel coronavirus if the old malaria drug proves successful in clinical trials.

VACCINE/ TREATMENT DEVELOPMENT

IFPMA members

- **Novartis:** [Novartis announces plan to initiate clinical study of Jakavi in evere COVID-19 patients and establish international compassionate use program](#). Novartis today announced plans to initiate a Phase III clinical trial in collaboration with Incyte to evaluate the use of Jakavi® (ruxolitinib) for treatment of a type of severe immune overreaction called cytokine storm that can lead to life-threatening respiratory complications in patients with COVID-19.
- **Reuters:** [Sanofi can produce millions of doses of potential coronavirus drug - CEO](#). Sanofi SA will be able to provide millions of doses of hydroxychloroquine for patients with the illness caused by the novel coronavirus if the old malaria drug proves successful in clinical trials.
- **Ipsen:** [Ipsen donates €2 million to the Institut Pasteur to support research on COVID-19](#). Since January, the Institut Pasteur has devoted a portion of its research to understanding the emerging COVID-19 virus, in terms of epidemiology, biological characteristics, pathogenicity.
- **Reuters:** [EMA recommends compassionate use of Gilead's remdesivir for COVID-19](#). The European Medicines Agency (EMA) on Friday recommended Gilead Sciences Inc's investigational antiviral drug remdesivir should be used for treating COVID-19 in compassionate use programmes.

Others

- **Lancet:** [Global coalition to accelerate COVID-19 clinical research in resource-limited settings](#). A review of clinical trial registries, as of March 24, 2020, identified 536 relevant registered clinical trials. Of the 332 COVID-19 related clinical trials, 188 are open for recruitment and 146 trials are preparing to recruit. a and & [COVID-19 Clinical Research](#)

[Coalition](#) focused on Accelerating research on COVID-19 in resource-limited settings is launched.

- **CNBC:** [Phase 2 of coronavirus vaccine, human trials may be in spring, Moderna chairman says](#). The first human trial of a vaccine to prevent the new coronavirus could advance to the next step this spring. “We’ll enter hopefully phase 2 trials, we expect that to happen in the spring, perhaps early summer”. Moderna Chairman Nour Afeyan said.
- **Business Insider:** [Bill Gates is funding new factories for 7 potential coronavirus vaccines, even though it will waste billions of dollars](#). Bill Gates is plugging money into building factories for seven promising coronavirus vaccines, Gates said he was picking the top seven from the available vaccine candidates and building manufacturing capacity for them. Bill and Melinda Gates have already [pledged \\$100 million](#) towards fighting the coronavirus, and the Gates Foundation has shipped at-home [coronavirus test kits to people in Washington State](#).
- **JNS:** [Israeli researchers believe coronavirus testing could commence by June](#). Israeli researchers said they are days away from finishing production of the active component of a coronavirus vaccine that could be tested on humans starting June 1st. “We are in the final stages and within a few days we will hold the proteins—the active component of the vaccine,” Dr. Chen Katz, group leader of the biotechnology group at the MIGAL Galilee Research Institute.
- **Financial Times:** [German vaccine makers urge regulators to ease rules for virus](#). German biotech groups leading the race to develop a coronavirus vaccine have warned that governments will have to ease clinical trial regulations for hundreds of millions of doses to be available by the end of the year. BioNTech and CureVac, based in south-west Germany, are carrying out trials of a potential vaccine on mice and are set to start trials on humans within weeks.
- **The Brussels Times:** [Government has €5 million for research into coronavirus vaccine](#). The Alexander De Croo, Belgian Finance Minister announces it is ready to contribute €5 million to CEPI to an international effort to speed up research into a vaccine against the coronavirus (Covid-19).

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & ACCESS

- **Medicines Patent Pool:** [The Medicines Patent Pool and Unitaid respond to access efforts for COVID-19 treatments and technologies](#). The Board of the Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) has [decided](#) to temporarily expand its mandate to include any health technology that could contribute to the global response to COVID-19 and where licensing could facilitate innovation and access. With the support of [Unitaid](#), this will allow MPP to offer its IP and licensing expertise to the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) to assist the global effort in any way it can.
- **Open Letter to WIPO: Intellectual Property and COVID-19** 140 plus organizations sent a letter to WIPO asking it to ensure that intellectual property regimes support, and do not impede, efforts to both fighting the new Coronavirus outbreak and its consequences. Ask countries to take advantage of flexibilities; call on right holders to remove licensing, and ask WIPO to supporting the call by Costa Rica for the WHO to create a global pool of rights in COVID-19 related technology and data.
- **Reuters:** [Swiss ease access to COVID-19 treatments with exceptional decree](#). Switzerland sought to speed access to drugs that could be used against coronavirus-caused COVID-19 disease with an order that allows them to be deployed in hospitals before getting formal approval by the country’s regulator. The decree covers generic malaria medicine

hydroxychloroquine, Abbvie's HIV drug Kaletra, Gilead Science's experimental remdesivir and Roche's Actemra, all of which are being studied for potential use against coronavirus.

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

- **Abbvie:** [Donates \\$35 Million for COVID-19 Relief to Support Healthcare Systems, Patients and communities](#). AbbVie announced a donation of \$35 million to support COVID-19 relief efforts. In the U.S., AbbVie's funds will be used to support healthcare capacity for hospitals as well as protect vulnerable populations by enabling access to food and essential supplies. In Europe, the donation will provide critical equipment and supplies to patients and front-line healthcare workers in the hardest-hit countries.

GLOBAL RESPONSE

- **World Bank:** [World Bank Group Launches First Operations for COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) Emergency Health Support, Strengthening Developing Country Responses](#). The World Bank Group is prepared to deploy up to \$160 billion over the next 15 months to support COVID-19 measures that will help countries respond to immediate health consequences of the pandemic and bolster economic recovery.
- **European Commission:** [Commission encourages and facilitates cross-border treatment of patients and deployment of medical staff](#). To support and encourage cross-border healthcare cooperation between national, regional and local authorities, the Commission has today issued [practical guidance](#) to Member States.
- **The Telegraph:** [Some say there is a trade-off, save lives or save jobs – this is the dilemma](#). **Op-ed by Dr Tedros & Kristalina Georgieva (IMF Managing Director)**. Countries face a trade-off to either save lives or save livelihoods. This is a false dilemma – getting the virus under control is, if anything, a prerequisite to saving livelihoods. WHO and IMF jointly appeal to policymakers, especially in emerging market and developing economies, to recognise that protecting public health and putting people back to work go hand-in-hand.
- **UN SDG Action Campaign** [Calling 1 million problem solvers to build solutions #ForPeopleForPlanet #TheGlobalHack](#). Global leaders, government officials, activists, experts, startups and private sector leaders, media and creatives, developers and literal hackers - to join the #TheGlobalHack from 7 – 10 April 2020 to co-create solutions to this global health crisis and beyond.

SUPPLY OF MEDICINES

- **New York Times:** [Essential Drug Supplies for Virus Patients Are Running Low](#). Medicines to alleviate breathing difficulty, relieve pain and sedate coronavirus patients are in very high demand, depleting stock around the US. Orders for antibiotics like azithromycin and antiviral medicines like ribavirin nearly tripled. Medicines used for sedation and pain management, including fentanyl, midazolam and propofol, increased by 100 percent, 70 percent and 60 percent respectively.
- **Politico:** European Commissioner for Health Stella Kyriakides and [EFPIA](#) called for an end to export restrictions on medicines inside the EU.
- **PrNewsWire:** [Ping An Donates £1.1m of COVID-19 Medical Supplies to the United Kingdom](#). Ping An Insurance (Group) Company of China, announced that Ping An and its Chairman Ma Mingzhe are now responding to the urgent needs of the British government by donating medical supplies to the United Kingdom with a total value of GBP1.1 million.

COVID-19: FOCUS ON AFRICA

- **Africanews:** [WHO concerned as COVID-19 cases accelerate in Africa](#). With more than 6000 COVID-19 cases reported in Africa, the virus is threatening fragile health systems on the continent. Infections are increasingly spreading not only between African countries but within different localities in the hardest-hit countries.
- **Nature:** [African nations missing from coronavirus trials](#). WHO wants many more African nations to participate in its SOLIDARITY trial. The call comes as a new international consortium of researchers urges faster action on clinical research in countries with weak health systems and offers to help coordinate the process so that researchers from Africa can more easily join. So far, the only African country to have formally joined the trial is South Africa. Senegal and Burkina Faso — which have some of the most COVID-19 cases in the continent — are in the process of being enrolled.
- **AlJazeera:** [One week into lockdown, how is S Africa faring in COVID-19 fight?](#) Coronavirus figures are still relatively low but South African officials and experts warn against complacency. So far, almost 50,000 people have been tested across the country, and authorities are mobilising 67 mobile testing units to ramp the figure up to 30,000 people daily.

PANDEMIC DEVELOPMENTS

- **BBC:** [Where will be the last place to catch Covid-19?](#) As of 2 April, 18 countries had not reported a Covid-19 case, according to a BBC tally using data from Johns Hopkins University. Most are small islands with few visitors - in fact, seven of the world's 10 least-visited places, [as per UN data](#), are free of Covid-19. Andy Tatem, a professor in spatial demography and epidemiology at the University of Southampton, states that the remote islands in the South Pacific will likely be the last ones to be hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHO – Daily COVID-19 update, 3 April - situation report No. 74 - cases start to climb in the South-East Asia Region, the Regional Director Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh held a virtual meeting with Health Ministers of the Region calling for a stronger whole-of-society approach. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) launched an appeal yesterday for funds towards priority public health measures to help Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Statement by Dr. Tedros:

- There are now more than 1 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 have now been reported to WHO, including more than 50,000 deaths.
- For some countries, debt relief is essential to enable them to take care of their people and avoid economic collapse. This is an area of cooperation between WHO, the IMF and the World Bank. But ultimately, the best way for countries to end restrictions and ease their economic effects is to attack the virus, with the aggressive and comprehensive package of measures that we have spoken about many times before: find, test, isolate and treat every case, and trace every contact.
- Countries will need to make substantial investments in many areas of their health systems if they want to successfully “live with the virus,”
- The WHO calls on countries and partners to strengthen the foundations of health systems. That means health facilities need a reliable supply of funding to purchase essential medical supplies.

- WHO's Solidarity Response Fund has now raised more than US\$127 million from more than 219,000 individuals and organizations.
- Two months ago, WHO issued its Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, with an initial ask of US\$675 million to support the response. I'm delighted to say that almost US\$690 million has now been pledged or received.

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