

**Top news:**

- The first-ever virtual World Health Assembly (WHA) concluded this afternoon.
  - The EU resolution on the COVID-19 response was adopted by the WHA without any country objecting. The final resolution was co-sponsored by over 100 countries.
  - While the US didn't block the adoption of the resolution, it disassociated from language in the resolution referring to TRIPS flexibilities and access to sexual reproductive health services.
  - US President Donald Trump threatened to cut funding and the US' membership to the WHO while most countries backed WHO's leading role in the global response to the virus.
- The EU Commission has mobilised another €122 million from its research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020, for urgently needed research into COVID-19.
- AstraZeneca explores options to strike coronavirus vaccine production deals similar to one it agreed with the UK.

**WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY**

- **Reuters:** [EU resolution on pandemic adopted at WHO assembly](#). None of the WHO's 194 member states - which include the United States - raised objections to the resolution brought by the European Union on behalf of more than 100 countries including Australia, China and Japan.
- **Reuters:** [U.S. rejects WHO coronavirus resolution's language on abortion, IP](#). The US Washington did not block the consensus adoption of the text, but in a statement it said it "dissociates" from paragraphs guaranteeing the rights of poor countries to waive IP rules to obtain medicines in an emergency, and guaranteeing reproductive and sexual healthcare in the pandemic.
- **The Guardian:** [Trump threatens to pull out of WHO over 'failed response' to pandemic](#). Donald Trump has threatened to cut funding to the WHO permanently and even pull the US out of the global body altogether unless it makes "major substantive improvements" in a letter to Dr Tedros.
- **The Guardian:** [Member states back WHO after renewed Donald Trump attack](#). EU diplomats have been focusing on trying to minimise the US-China clash at the assembly, and still hope the compromise resolution can minimise the damage, and possibly pave the way for Trump to delay a final break from the WHO. The EU threw its weight behind the WHO, urging all countries to support it in the wake of Trump's continued attacks. "This is the time for solidarity," said the European commission's spokeswoman Virginie Battu-Henriksson. "It is not the time for finger-pointing or undermining multilateral cooperation."
- **IFPMA:** [Pharma and other innovative health groups tell World Health Assembly it stands united with governments and global health stakeholders worldwide to combat COVID-19](#). The biopharmaceutical industry is joined by biotech, self-medication, diagnostic, and medical technology industries committed to the goal of accelerating development, production and equitable global access to safe, quality, effective, and affordable COVID-19 medical products and to ensure that in the fight against COVID-19, no one is left behind.
- **EU:** [Joint Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell and Commissioner Stella Kyriakides on the adoption of the resolution on COVID-19 response](#). The resolution sets out actions for every single one of us. For countries around the world,

for the WHO and for other international actors, including civil society and the private sector.

- **Heidi news:** [Patent-free vaccine, Taiwan or the EU resolution: what is exactly the position of Switzerland?](#) Nora Kronig Romero, Swiss global health ambassador and main delegate taking part to the WHA says that Switzerland has engaged for many years on a holistic approach for an equitable, affordable, timely and innovative access to medicines. However, we should not forget that in the process of bringing a discovery to the market and making it accessible for everybody, the private sector plays a very important role.

## IP & ACCESS

- **New Straits Times:** [MHC urge companies to include middle-income countries in Covid-19 solutions](#). Malaysian Health Coalition (MHC) in a joint statement urges companies to include middle-income countries in COVID-19 solutions. "We hope for industry associations, such as IFPMA, phRMA or EFPIA to publish criteria for inclusion in these licenses and ensure that decision-making formulated are based on real and meaningful country differences rather than operating purely on the basis of World Bank categorisations of country income status based on GNI per capita," MHC said.
- **Bloomberg:** [Vaccine Nationalism Puts Global Advocate on COVID Front Line](#). "The natural instinct of political leaders is to protect their own populations," said Seth Berkley, CEO of Gavi. "Of course, that's what they should do, but they need to understand part of that is making sure the world is protected."
- **EU Observer:** [Vaccine selfishness goes against science, EU regulator warns](#). Guido Rasi, EMA director, said the first batch of vaccines should go to "people most at risk of infection", such as medical staff on the front lines or transport sector workers, not just in all EU countries, but internationally.
- **ICRC:** [COVID crisis underlines a chasm](#). A statement from Esperanza Martinez, the head of health for the International Committee of the Red Cross, writes that the Covid-19 crisis has exposed the stark inequality in access to effective health services between developed and undeveloped countries.
- **Oxfam:** [Big Pharma must put people over profits to end the COVID-19 crisis](#). *Opinion by Nicholas Lusiani, Senior Advisor on Corporate Advocacy at Oxfam America.* Who gets access to lifesaving medicines and vaccines—and when—will determine who lives and who dies. But without proper incentives, these overtures will amount to little. Big Pharma's "business as usual" model could make billions of taxpayer-funded research, charge sky-high prices, and funnel profits to wealthy investors
- **STAT News:** [COVID-19 has exposed the limits of the pharmaceutical market model](#). *Opinion by Tahir Amin, Co-executive director of the Initiative for Medicines, Access & Knowledge (I-MAK) and Rohit Malpani, former policy*

director of the MSF. They argue a new model of drug development for pandemics and neglected diseases is needed and why it shouldn't be restricted by the current market-based model.

## GLOBAL RESPONSE

- **Global Health NOW:** [USAID Deserves a Bigger Role in the Global “Dance” to Defeat COVID-19](#). *Opinion by Jamie Bay Nishi, Director of the Global Health Technologies Coalition (GHTC)*. With appropriate resources, USAID, working independently and in partnership with other US agencies, could be instrumental in spurring the development of COVID-19 tools such as heat-stable vaccines, medical devices, rapid point-of-care diagnostics, the author argues.

## GLOBAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

- **Africa News:** [Africa’s Finance Ministers and Private Sector Group seek to rapidly resolve commercial debt service obligations together](#). The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) convened a meeting between African Finance Ministers, the Africa Private Sector Working Group and the African Union (AU) Special Envoy on COVID-19 as the search continues for solutions to ensure African economies enjoy continued market access and meet their private sector debt service obligations.
- **CNBC:** [European markets slip as investors monitor coronavirus vaccine progress, economic data](#). European stocks fell into the red, halting the positive trend set at the start of the week, as investors monitor hopes for a coronavirus vaccine and outlooks for economic recovery.

## MANUFACTURING

- **NYT:** [Trump to Tap New Company to Make COVID-19 Drugs in the U.S.](#) The Trump administration will announce that it has signed a \$354 million four-year contract with a new company in Richmond, Va., to manufacture generic medicines and pharmaceutical ingredients that are needed to treat Covid-19 but are now made overseas, mostly in India and China.
- **Fierce Pharma:** [Moderna taps \\$1.34B stock offering to bankroll its promising COVID-19 vaccine](#). The biotech aims to raise \$1.34 billion in a public stock offering. The company plans to primarily use the proceeds to fund manufacturing and distribution of its mRNA vaccine candidate.
- **Fierce Pharma:** [Univcells inks deal to produce prefabricated vaccine facilities for potential COVID-19 shot](#). The company has partnered with German construction firm Excyte to produce prefab facilities that "will enable rapid mass production and shortened time-to-market" for potential COVID-19 vaccines.
- **DW:** [Coronavirus vaccine: India could play decisive role in distribution](#). The Serum Institute of India is ramping up production of the Oxford vaccine candidate in anticipation of it passing trials.

## R&D FUNDING

- **European Commission:** [Commission boosts urgently needed research and innovation with additional €122 million](#). The Commission has mobilised another €122 million from its research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020, for urgently needed research into COVID-19.

## TREATMENT & VACCINE DEVELOPMENT

### IFPMA members

- **The New York Times:** [AstraZeneca in Talks With Other Governments to Replicate UK Vaccine Deal](#). AstraZeneca said it was in talks with governments around the world to strike coronavirus vaccine production deals similar to one it agreed with Britain.

### Others

- **Times Now:** [Sorrento Therapeutics claims breakthrough COVID-19 antibody that could cure coronavirus infection](#). The company claims to have achieved a breakthrough on its COVID-19 therapeutic antibody candidate 'STI-1499', which it said can eliminate the deadly virus from the human body within four days.
- **Times Now:** [Bangladeshi doctors tout COVID-19 'cure': Could a coronavirus treatment be hiding in plain sight?](#) Dr Tarek Alam, the head of the medical department at the Bangladesh Medical College Hospital, and one of the senior members of the team, stated that a combination of Ivermectin and tetracycline were administered to 60 patients.
- **Times Now:** [Chinese scientists claim new drug can stop COVID-19 pandemic without vaccine](#). Chinese scientists said they are developing a new drug, claiming that the medication can help stop the coronavirus pandemic, perhaps, without a vaccine. The drug being developed at China's Peking University has been tested successfully on animals.
- **Bloomberg:** [Chinese Billionaire Expects Coronavirus Vaccine Trials at Home Soon](#). The billionaire founder of Fosun Group expects to soon win approvals for testing a vaccine against the new coronavirus in his home country China.

## CLINICAL TRIALS

- **Russia News:** [Russia to begin clinical trials of anti-coronavirus vaccine in one month](#). Russian Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said that Russia is developing full-cycle medicines, which are ready for clinical use. Serious work is being done to develop vaccines for preventive immunization against the disease.
- **Reuters:** [South Africa BCG booster trials seek low-cost weapon against COVID-19](#). The idea of testing the BCG vaccine in Africa against COVID-19 is underway and if successful, give the continent a cheap and easily deployable weapon against the virus.
- **STAT News:** [EMA urged to release full clinical trial data upon authorizing COVID-19 treatments](#). In a [letter](#) to the EMA, four country directors from the independent watchdog Cochrane and leaders from Germany's Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care argued that it is critical to promptly release clinical study reports to support further research and proper medical care.

## GLOBAL HEALTH IMPACT

- **WFP:** [COVID 19 Economic and Health Impacts on Regional Food and Nutrition Security](#). Increased reprioritisation of national expenditure towards control of

COVID-19 will affect allocations to other sectors such as agriculture which would have long-term effects on food production and supply.

- **Bloomberg:** [Coronavirus Seen Doubling Need for Food Aid in East Africa](#). The number of acutely food insecure people in East Africa and the Horn of Africa is likely to increase to between 34 million and 43 million from May through July due to the socio-economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

#### **CORONAVIRUS & AFRICA**

- **The Africa Report:** [Health and economy to gain from boost in Africa's mobile payment](#). Limiting cash is then a primary focus of the long-term COVID-19 response by African governments, and we have seen Kenya, Ghana, West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and Tunisia's central bank in favor of mobile payment.
- **France 24:** ['We can get it done here': African tech tackles coronavirus locally](#). African scientists, engineers and innovators have turned to homegrown solutions to prepare for the worst case scenario.
- **Devex:** [Could COVID-19 help Africa shift to solar energy?](#) Indeed, the coronavirus crisis is drastically changing lives, creating a new reality in which the entire economy, including the solar sector, should find new paths of operation.

#### **WHO - COVID-19 UPDATE, 19 May**

Closing statement of Dr Tedros during the WHA [here](#).

- I thank Member States for adopting the COVID19 resolution, which calls for an independent and comprehensive evaluation of the international response – including, but not limited to, WHO's performance
- I will initiate an evaluation at the earliest appropriate moment. We welcome any initiative to strengthen global health security & to strengthen WHO.
- WHO remains fully committed to transparency, accountability & continuous improvement.
- We'll continue working with countries & partners to ensure equitable access to the tools to prevent, detect & treat COVID19;
- We'll continue supporting countries to prepare & respond;
- We'll continue working with countries to sustain essential health services.

#### **NEW WHO RESOURCES**

[Thirteenth General Programme of Work \(GPW13\). Methods for Impact Measurement.](#)

- The WHO publication describes the methods that should be used to measure the impact of the WHO's GPW13 running from 2019 to 2023. The ambition of GPW13 is to improve the health of billions of people in these five years.
- Progress is measured at three levels: 46 outcome indicators and their global targets, the Triple Billion targets, and healthy life expectancy. The report was written during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic and states that gaps in data and measurement methods are highlighted because of the pandemic

[Interim report on WHO's response to COVID-19, January-April 2020. Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee for the WHO Health Emergencies Programme.](#)

- This report provides an overview of WHO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in its initial months.
- It provides details regarding the overall situation and global context of the COVID-19 pandemic; the International Health Regulations (2005) and country preparedness; and WHO's leadership and capacity for managing a pandemic.

[WHO results report Programme Budget 2018-2019. Driving Impact in Every country.](#)

- This report shows the results of a bottom-up (country-level) process for monitoring progress and reporting on achievements and challenges in implementing WHO's programme budget 2018–2019. The results presented in this report are aligned with the commitments in the biennium 2018–2019 under the previous strategic plan but looks at WHO's achievements and challenges through the lens of the new strategy. It will therefore help set the baseline for the “triple billion” targets.