

Statement to WHA74 on GSPOA

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WHA74

Agenda item 13.4

Global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property

Once again, the World Health Assembly is asked to consider the implementation Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Global Health, Innovation, and Intellectual Property (GSPOA) as recommended by the 148th Session of the Executive Board last January. We commend the Secretariat and a few Member States for their long-term commitment to an initiative that remains relevant to respond to current and future health challenges.

We are heartened to see that some of the topics originally addressed by GSPOA, like the pooling of intellectual property rights, the need for greater transparency of R&D costs and the realignment of health research priorities remain part of the conversation, and high on the policy agenda at regional and global levels. However, still missing is the coherent and comprehensive implementation of the different elements that make the GSPOA such an appealing and novel approach to improving access to innovation and ensuring that health technologies benefit the most people, regardless of nationality, origin, or wealth.

The establishment of the observatory on Health R&D in 2017, and approval of Resolution WHA 72.8 on transparency of pharmaceutical markets two years later, are commendable initiatives that bring us closer to informed decisions regarding research, procurement, and supply of health technologies. The creation, a year ago, of the COVID-19 Technologies Access Pool (C-TAP) clearly demonstrates the willingness of a number of Member States to attempt new approaches to the constraints and shortcomings that have been exposed by the pandemic.

HAI still believes that the implementation of the GSPOA can bring about the necessary changes in the global health architecture and make health technologies not only accessible to erstwhile marginalised populations, but also make it responsive to health needs rather than market returns. We welcome the proposed resolution on strengthening the local production of medicine and health technologies to improve access, especially the support for C-TAP, and note positively the announcement of future drafting of an international pandemic preparedness treaty which we expect to include measures that facilitate the sharing of IP and enable technology transfer in a systematic way.