

Statement to the 148th session of the WHO Executive Board

Agenda Item 8

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

Health Action International is encouraged that this Executive Board is asked to consider how the remaining actions of the Global Strategy and Plan of action on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property (GSPOA) can move forwards; despite its tardy implementation, GSPOA remains an indispensable tool for governments and other stakeholders to address the main challenges to making health innovations available, accessible and affordable to those in need.

We welcome that the expert committee deemed all elements of the GSPOA as viable for implementation, for the combination of its different spheres and domains, such as research, technology transfer and intellectual property rights management, is one of its main strengths.

Regarding the specific actions identified, we note positively the involvement of several United Nations agencies and other international organisations in a joint effort led by WHO. Such stewardship should be explicitly acknowledged in topics including TRIPS flexibilities or health-sensitive patentability guidelines.

Current circumstances vindicate the mandate of the GSPOA and make its implementation an urgent task that calls on every stakeholder to contribute and engage most specially in issues, such as promotion of pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity in low- and middle-income countries and the need for greater transparency in pharmaceutical markets.

Lastly, we believe that platforms like the Covid-19 Technologies Pool (C-TAP) should play a pivotal role in the implementation of the GSOPA as it gathers know-how, shares relevant data and facilitates the scale up of production of vaccines, diagnostics and other health goods.