



**73<sup>rd</sup> WHO World Health Assembly – May 2020**  
**Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi)**  
**joint statement on provisional agenda item 3: COVID-19 pandemic response**

WHO Member States must take five decisive steps to transform good intentions about access to COVID-19 drugs, diagnostics, and vaccines into tangible health tools in the hands of clinicians and patients:

1. Ensure researchers, public health experts, civil society, and political leaders from low- and middle-income countries have a seat at the decision-making table. Research in resource-constrained settings must be accelerated and supported to identify the tools and interventions that will save lives.
2. Commit to open sharing of research knowledge and data, which improves efficiency and accelerates scientific progress. R&D funding should be made conditional on results, data, promising compounds, clinical trial protocols and results, being put in the public domain.
3. Guarantee that health tools are free of intellectual property restrictions, which can obstruct research and large-scale production of affordable health technologies. No new legal rights should be sought, and technology owners should either not enforce their existing IP or share it via non-exclusive licensing globally. Countries must use all legal mechanisms, including TRIPS flexibilities to ensure access.
4. Act now to ensure sufficient production, equitable allocation, and affordable pricing. Additional production capacity must be created, including through technology transfer. New health tools need to be equitably allocated both between countries and within countries. Pricing must be as close as possible to cost of production, affordable for health systems, and free to those most in need.
5. Require full transparency of the massive public investments into discovery and development of COVID health tools. Transparency is key to securing public trust and demonstrating accountability of governments and funding recipients.

In sum, Member States must ensure that even the poorest, most vulnerable, and those at highest risk, are guaranteed timely and equitable access to the fruits of scientific progress in this pandemic.