



Statement on agenda item 11.5—Addressing the global shortage of, and access to, medicines and vaccines

Delivered at the Seventy-First World Health Assembly

Thank you, Chairman. PATH is encouraged by WHO's comprehensive approach to addressing the many barriers to access. Access is a complex issue, and in our decades of experience accelerating the development and delivery of health products, we've observed that failures to achieve access are rarely due to a single cause. Barriers are best overcome when addressed holistically, considering affordability, availability, acceptability, and sustainability.

We are particularly pleased to see the recognition of the need for stronger regulatory systems and harmonized processes as critical to facilitating access. Additional support from member states is necessary to build on the progress enabled by platforms, such as the African Vaccine Regulatory Forum, in strengthening local capacity and streamlining regulatory reviews. We also encourage Member States to other regulatory strengthening initiatives like WHO's Prequalification of Medicines Programme, which continues to be critical to quality assured medicines.

A globally coordinated approach to research and development remains a critical need and PATH supports the Global Observatory on Health Research and Development. However, full funding and support of member states will be required for real impact.

PATH encourages WHO to better leverage the expertise and experience of product development partnerships in negotiating and securing sustainable access commitments from partners. These organizations have decades of experience managing intellectual property, supporting affordability, strengthening local research and regulatory capacity, and managing supply chains. We urge WHO to tap into these sources of expertise.