



## News Release

June 20th, 2022

### **JPMA Statement on the TRIPS Waiver Agreement at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference**

The Japan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (JPMA) expresses deep disappointment with the decision on TRIPS Waiver for COVID-19 vaccines endorsed at the 12th World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference (MC-12) held in Geneva on June 17, 2022. The MC-12 Agreement will send a wrong message to people around the world, suggesting that intellectual property (IP) is a barrier to pandemic response rather than an enabler bringing novel healthcare technologies to patients in a safe and quick manner.

IP has supported the fastest development and scale-up of safe and effective vaccines in history, with 13.9 billion COVID-19 vaccines produced to date. The IP framework has provided the basis for more than 380 voluntary partnerships for COVID-19 vaccines to be set up in record time, 88% of which involve technology transfer.<sup>1</sup> The MC-12 Agreement implies that they do not appreciate these achievements resulting from the use of IP and no effective solutions have been proposed to solve the problems. Therefore, we are concerned that it may have severe consequences on innovation and global health security. The IP framework described above has brought solutions to tackle COVID-19 and facilitated the unprecedented number of partnerships, voluntary licensing, and knowledge-sharing taking place during this pandemic. TRIPS Waiver, however, may dismantle the very framework and have negative ripple effects on the similar future frameworks.

Furthermore, given that the sufficient production level is currently maintained, it is obvious that TRIPS Waiver is an outdated and unnecessary solution. To deliver vaccines to those who need them, each country must tackle issues including; 1) removal of various trade barriers such as export controls and 2) improvement of the inadequate infrastructure consisting of pharmaceutical administration, distribution, and healthcare professionals. The MC-12 Agreement may send a wrong message not only to the pharmaceutical industry but to all sectors leading innovation.

Regardless of the MC-12 Agreement, we, as the pharmaceutical industry, will continue to devote ourselves to helping stamp out COVID-19 at the earliest possible time and saving as many lives as possible, in close collaboration with administrative agencies in each country and relevant parties.

Yasushi Okada, President  
Japan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association

Contact: Public Relations  
Japan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association  
Mail: [kouhou@jpma.or.jp](mailto:kouhou@jpma.or.jp)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.jpma.or.jp/resource-centre/research-based-biopharmaceutical-industry-on-the-trips-waiver-discussions-at-wto-ministerial-conference-mc12>