

Statement made to WHO INB 13, 19.2.25, EMBL European Bioinformatics Institute (represented by Dr. Guy Cochrane)

Thank you, Madame Co-Chair.

The EMBL European Bioinformatics Institute wishes to highlight to Parties an opportunity and, we believe, a need in Art. 12 paragraph 3 to reflect the principle of "best available science and evidence" that is introduced in Art. 3 paragraph 6.

Science builds upon science. A scientist working in isolation without access to previous science makes little progress. The accessibility, transparency and accountability of science brings scrutiny that improves and qualifies. It also provides the tools and methods—the foundations—for future science and the application or use of this science.

A scientist interpreting data builds upon what is known from previous data; he or she references the data generated by others and interprets in light of these data.

A single pathogen sequence is uninformative and of little value in the absence of either data for comparison or tools built upon these data.

Rather, the value emerges when the sequence is interpreted based upon a foundation of scientific data and knowledge that includes prior outbreaks, previously circulating pathogens, previous tools and methodologies. Today's outbreak data become a part of the foundation for tomorrow's public health policy and response.

Indeed, at the beginning of 2020, had there not pre-existed tens of thousands of accessible Coronavirus sequences, a wealth of protein structures, clinical safety data and much more, then identifying and characterising SARS-Cov-2 would have been at best severely delayed and likely impossible; diagnostics would not have been developed within hours, vaccine programmes initiated within days and drugs repurposed within weeks.

It is abundantly clear that these essential public health assets - these benefits - were not shared equitably around the world and we applaud and encourage Parties in their work to build an agreement that truly addresses this inequity.

Transparent and productive science is not here the primary goal, but the continued productivity of science is essential for yielding the public health assets—the benefits—that must then be shared equitably.

A Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing system that itself offers transparency, demonstrates fairness, is capable of supporting traceability and will be truly useful must build upon, and contribute to, "best available science and evidence"

Thank you.