SOUTH CENTRE STATEMENT FOR THE 74TH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

Item 13.4: Global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property

In the current context of the Covid-19 pandemic, advancing the implementation of the recommendations of the Global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property is critical.

Thus, efforts must be redoubled to ensure that the prioritised recommendations over the period 2021-22 are fully delivered, with the necessary resource allocation. The WHO proposed implementation plan for the period 2021-22, as described in EB document EB148/10, does not go far enough. One aspect of the implementation plan that is inadequate is that it is limited to planning for the activities that the WHO Secretariat will be advancing. There are no specific actions advanced for Member States or other parties, in contrast to the Global Plan of Action. If Member States, particularly the more resource-endowed countries, and other relevant stakeholders, fail to make commitments to deliver on the GSP-PHI recommendations advanced by the review panel, the GSP-PHI will clearly need to be extended for the period beyond 2022.

Areas that must be prioritized are building and improving innovative capacity including for local production, the effective transfer of technology including on concessional and preferential terms, and removing obstacles to delivery and access such as those related to intellectual property.

The EB document EB148/10 referenced in the DG general report does not provide a detailed report on the status of implementation of the recommendations, either by Member States or by the WHO Secretariat. More regular briefing by the WHO Secretariat should be requested to provide more details including on the implementation, the financial allocation, and the integration of the GSP-PHI prioritised recommendations with the implementation of the WHO roadmap for access to medicines, vaccines and other health products 2019- 2023.

The draft resolution on strengthening local production of medicines and other health a technology clearly recognizes that local production is a conduit to improve

timely and affordable access to medical products, a major gap for putting an end to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is important for the WHO to increase support for Member States to build and sustain capacity for local production, including through the use of policy space available in relation to the application of intellectual property rights and technology transfer. The South Centre calls for all relevant stakeholders to support this effort and for the necessary resources to be flexibly allocated to the WHO for this purpose.