

17 MARCH 2020

IPASA HOLDING STATEMENT ON CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

The Innovative Pharmaceutical Association South Africa (**IPASA**) and its 26 member companies, join the government, the medical and business community in efforts to curtail and contain the spread of this serious health threat to our communities. We all need to be united as fellow South Africans to combat the spread.

IPASA wishes to commend and congratulate His Excellency the President and his Cabinet, in particular the Minister of Health, Dr. Zweli Mkhize, for the transparency and continuous updates, which is reassuring for the South African community. The media conference has also assured South Africans to a large extent as regards the steps the government is taking, and reiterating safety measures, what the public must and must not do, how members of the public may be able to receive assistance if they suspect that they may have been exposed to risk from the CoronaVirus (COVID-19), and importantly how the government is tackling this disaster from all angles.

Throughout the R&D-based biopharmaceutical industry, our first thoughts are with all those affected by the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (nCov-2019).

The spread of the epidemic is a major public health threat for all affected countries and we share the WHO's concern for those countries with weaker health systems who could be disproportionately impacted. Our industry welcomes the decision taken by the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare a pandemic on 11 March 2020.

The industry is fully supportive of efforts that will ensure the scientific community can respond quickly to the challenges this epidemic faces. As a science-driven industry that aims to address some of the world's biggest health care challenges, the research-based pharmaceutical industry have teams of scientists checking their compound libraries for potential candidates that can be active against the virus, and clearly has a role to play in developing new and improved medicines and vaccines to help respond to this pandemic, and uniquely positioned to respond rapidly to COVID-19. We have deep scientific knowledge gained from dealing with virus outbreaks such as Ebola, Zika, MERS and SARS. We have, and continue to invest, hundreds of billions of dollars in technologies that have dramatically shortened the time it takes to decode viruses and to develop potential treatment responses.

Our companies are taking all necessary precautions to safeguard their staff from the CoronaVirus (COVID-19) epidemic and the general public, and working with the business sector as represented by BUSA and Nedlac.

ENDS.

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