



statement

IFPMA, AREPI, IPASA, KAPI and LIPA call on the African and global health communities to raise awareness about the dangers of substandard and falsified medical products

On World Anti-counterfeit day, 10 June 2021, the [IFPMA](#) hosted a joint [event](#)¹ with local Pharmaceutical Industry Associations from across the African continent to tackle the topic of falsified medicines and chart a robust response to eliminate falsified medicines in the region.

Organized in conjunction with Novartis, the event focused on the importance of legislation and enforcement frameworks, regulatory measures, community response and awareness creation.

The following statement was released by the IFPMA and Africa associations after the event:

“The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a global surge in reported falsified medical products including personal protective equipment, diagnostic tests, and more recently falsified or substandard medicines, “cures” and vaccines. In Africa, the challenge of falsified and substandard medicines is even more pronounced with over 40% of all the counterfeits reported to the WHO, emanating from Africa. In November last year, a large consignment of counterfeit Covid vaccines was seized in South Africa.

AREPI, IPASA, KAPI and LIPA together with IFPMA call on the African and global health communities to raise awareness about the dangers of substandard and falsified medical products during this particularly challenging time for Global Health.

People participating in the production and traffic of falsified medicines are criminals, intentionally deceiving patients and putting lives at risk. Despite law enforcement efforts to prevent and crack down on these illicit activities, existing legislation and enforcement do not often reflect the severity of the crime or sufficiently deter criminals.

Effective action requires strong legislative frameworks that address this threat holistically, including the danger of illegal online pharmacies. We call on governments **to join and ratify the [Medicrime Convention](#)**, a unique international tool to deter those engaging in schemes aimed at deceiving patients, by criminalizing such activities, ensuring national and international cooperation and protecting public health. We need to come with stiffer penalties in Africa and more stringent legislative framework to deter, prevent and eliminate substandard or falsified medicines.

The R&D-based biopharmaceutical industry stands ready to support countries in tackling this issue through **awareness raising** campaigns, **capacity building** exercises and **health system strengthening** initiatives. The industry is ready to leverage on digital technologies to accelerate the fight against falsified medicines. As Africa aspires to attain the goals spelt out by the African Union, Agenda 63, we must ensure that falsified medicines do not enter the supply chain as this puts a risk on reversing the great efforts of attaining Universal Health Coverage.

¹ [Eliminating falsified medicines in Africa: How legislative frameworks can help.](#)