



## STATEMENT

### **WHO EMRO RC71: Regional flagship initiative 1: Expanding equitable access to medical products**

14 OCTOBER 2024, DOHA, QATAR – IFPMA welcomes the opportunity to make a statement at the WHO EMRO meeting and acknowledges the efforts of the Regional Director in introducing a flagship initiative on expanding equitable access to medical products. Attempts to bolster supply chain systems, promote production, and strengthen regulation in the region, for the region are to be commended.

The progress made in relation to these areas within the region are significant, and are critical to enhancing timely, affordable, and equitable access to medical products, while reducing the burden of falsified and substandard products on health systems. With regards to regulatory systems strengthening, we wish to congratulate the Egyptian Drug Authority for reaching maturity level 3 for vaccine regulation, and the Saudi Food and Drug Authority for achieving maturity level 4 last year in both medicines and vaccines. Building sustainable regulatory oversight and capacity is paramount for patient safety and for ensuring that available medicines and vaccines are safe, of appropriate quality, and effective. We support the use of reliance-based procedures to further improve access to innovative medicines and vaccines.

We also support the region's initiative to build resilient supply chains, develop procurement mechanisms, and foster open trade and voluntary collaborations, all of which are vital for achieving universal health coverage and health security, especially given the persistent threats faced by the region from a number of different hazards.

That said, the report on the flagship initiative demonstrates well how the various approaches required to ensure equitable and timely access to treatment and care are multi-faceted, complex, and require strong multistakeholder collaboration. One example of the complexity is variability in the listing between the Essential Medicines List (EML) and national EMLs across therapeutic areas and WHO regions, which can reflect differences in prioritization among Member States that are situated even within the same region.

As part of achieving these objectives, it is essential that WHO EMRO and Member States maintain open and inclusive dialogue with the private sector. Only together through the co-creation of solutions and holistic policies can we meet our shared objective of increasing equitable access to life-saving medicines and vaccines.