



Department
for International
Development



Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Secretary of State

Missing Medicines coalition
STOPAIDS
The Grayston Centre
28 Charles Square
London, N1 6HT

Our ref:

169866

27 July 2017

Dear Missing Medicines coalition,

Thank you for your letter of 4 July about research and development for affordable and appropriate medicines.

DFID is committed to ensuring access to low cost, effective medicines in the developing world. We support the provision of essential medicines and other health products through global partnerships such as the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), UNITAID, Gavi the Vaccine Alliance, and the Medicines Patent Pool (MPP).

We place a great emphasis on research and development of new vaccines, medicines and diagnostics for conditions that affect millions of poor people. As you highlighted, the UK is a leading investor in research and development for global health, through public-private Product Development Partnerships (PDPs), an innovative financing mechanism to stimulate research and development (R&D) where market incentives are insufficient.

PDPs are joint public-private partnerships that have made a significant difference over the last ten years, stimulating a high level of R&D, through research funding, not through revenue generated by patents. A number of private sector pharmaceutical companies are working in partnership with PDPs and others, to provide resources, funding technical, commercial and in-kind support for the development of new products for the diseases prevalent in low-income countries. PDPs de-link the market incentives to produce a drug from the R&D process, prioritise public health need over

profit and work in partnership with a wide range of different organisations, covering the public, private and philanthropic sectors.

Intellectual Property (IP) plays a vital role in incentivising the innovations needed to tackle public health challenges. The UK believes a robust and fair IP system is a key part of the innovation framework that allows economies to grow whilst enabling society to benefit from knowledge and ideas. IP is only one factor that affects the price of medicines, and the price of medicines itself is not the only barrier to access.

We support the Access to Medicine Index to increase the transparency of the pharmaceutical industry and understand the nature of their investments in R&D. However, it is recognised that a disaggregation of costs in company product portfolios is very difficult to achieve particularly as companies work across many different countries, with multiple partners at different phases of development and delivery, and in often using multiple shared inputs.

The UK Government supports the aims of the UN High Level Panel on Access to Medicines and welcomes efforts to shed light on this important issue. However, we note that this panel of experts could not reach agreement on the best approach, given the evidence presented. Our view is that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has already undertaken a large amount of work to consider the full range of barriers that limit access to medicines, and is well placed to consider which recommendations add the most value.

I understand that you have met with officials and have plans to meet further. I would be interested in reading the results of your current research on the impact of UK-funded health R&D. Please send a report of the research to Sue Kinn, in Research and Evidence Division (s-kinn@dfid.gov.uk).

I hope that you find this response helpful. Once again, thank you for writing to me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'P. Patel', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Secretary of State