

MPP AND COVID-19

COVID-19, the disease that dominated the world's attention throughout 2020, was declared a pandemic by WHO on 11 March 2020. Shortly after, MPP swiftly realised that equitable access to medicines and technologies for COVID-19, as they become available, will be a key factor in determining how effectively we deal with this pandemic. In consequence, MPP's Board expanded the organisation's mandate to COVID-19 on 31 March 2020.

The following days and months saw MPP charting the possible roles it could play in defeating the new coronavirus. By applying its tested voluntary licensing and patent pooling model, MPP could:

01

Help **fulfil the need for huge volumes of treatments** through its generic manufacturing partners

02

Leverage its broad partnerships towards increasing **the geographical reach of effective technologies**, especially in low- and middle-income countries

03

Aid in **bringing down the prices of medicines** by introducing multiple generic players and driving healthy competition among them

04

Ensure quality of generic versions of licensed health products

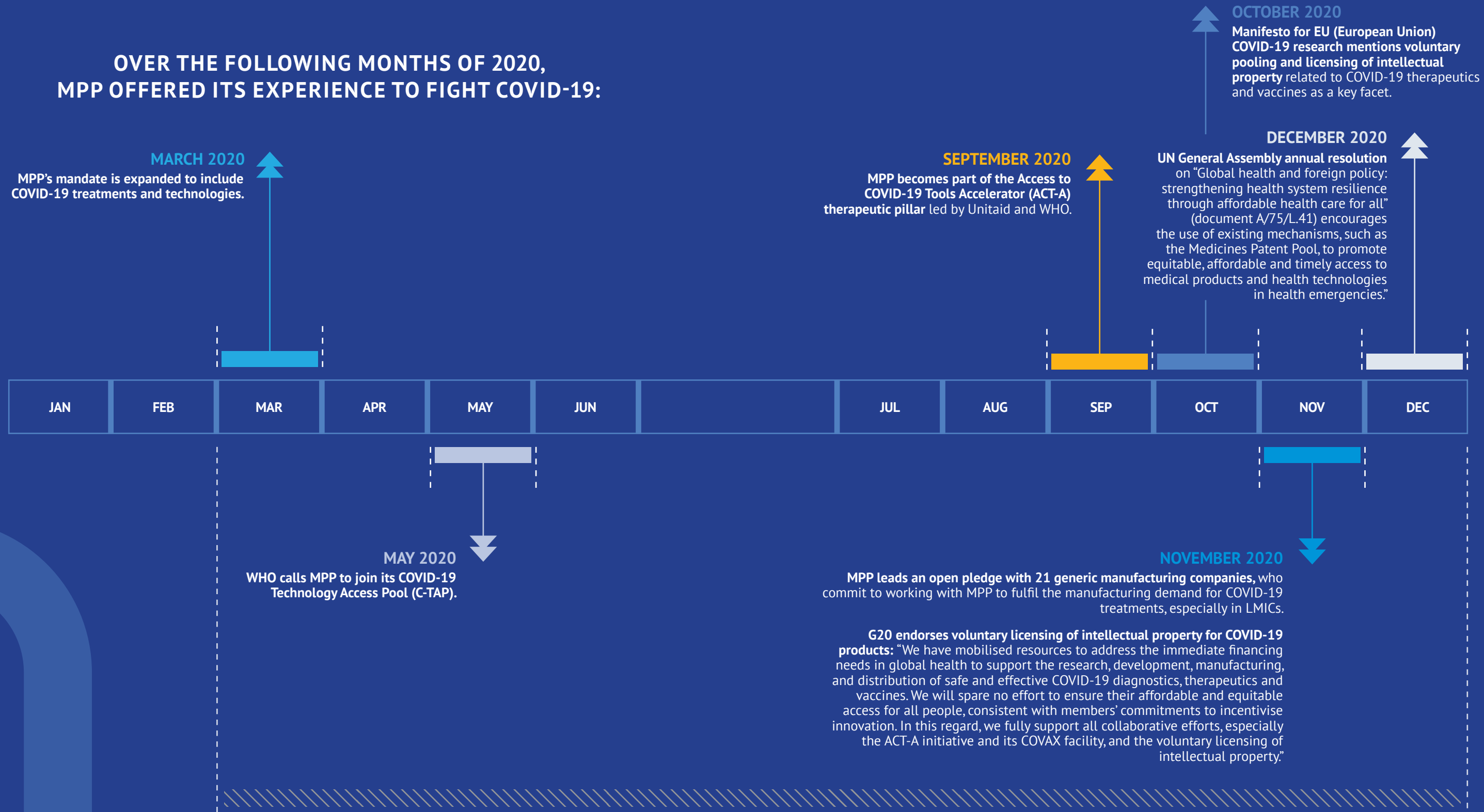
05

Complement direct efforts of originators and public health organisations towards leaving no one behind

06

Provide a sustainable model that does not rely on a philanthropic approach to access – one-off charities, philanthropic donations etc.

OVER THE FOLLOWING MONTHS OF 2020,
MPP OFFERED ITS EXPERIENCE TO FIGHT COVID-19:



► **THROUGHOUT 2020**

MPP explored with originators possible strategies to make potential COVID-19 treatments available in LMICs.

MPP's team executed scientific research, market monitoring, and evaluated generic manufacturing capacity for potential COVID-19 treatments.

► Products being tested for COVID-19 were included in MedsPaL, MPP's free patents and licences online database (see MedsPaL section).

MPP worked with licensees to ensure there would be adequate supplies of licensed treatments that had shown early promise for COVID-19, such as HIV medicine lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r)⁶ and hepatitis C medicine daclatasvir (DAC).⁷

6 MPP has been working with the innovator, AbbVie, and manufacturers of generic LPV/r since 2015, to enable affordable access in 106 developing countries. LPV/r, an HIV treatment, was included in several clinical trials, including the WHO Solidarity trial, as a promising candidate for treating hospitalised patients for COVID-19.

7 MPP has been working with Bristol-Myers Squibb and manufacturers of generic DAC to enable affordable access in LMICs through a licensing agreement since 2015. In July 2020, preliminary data suggested that DAC (in combination with sofosbuvir (SOF)) could be effective against COVID-19. While further and larger clinical trials are ongoing, MPP and its manufacturing partners remain committed to enabling access to this product for hepatitis C patients, as well as COVID-19 patients, if its effectiveness were to be confirmed in clinical trials.

MPP AND ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL MEDICINES

For too many, life-saving health products such as essential medicines are inaccessible, unaffordable or unavailable. 100 million people each year worldwide are driven into poverty because healthcare costs are too high⁸.

In 2018, MPP conducted a feasibility study funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to explore the public health need for, and potential feasibility and impact of, expanding the work of MPP into patented essential medicines in other therapeutic areas, like cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. The study highlighted the expected public health value of providing generic access to patented products on WHO's Model List of Essential Medicines (WHO EML) and those with a strong potential for future inclusion.

MPP's remit now covers patented medicines in these disease areas. In 2019, MPP published a prioritisation framework that outlines a methodology for assessing candidate medicines.

In 2020, building upon the organisation's work in essential medicines, MPP:

➤ ENGAGED WITH PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES

Initiating exploratory talks with patent holders of essential medicines for non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including cardiometabolic diseases and cancer, to gather industry perspectives and positions on the MPP model and explore potential willingness to partner with MPP to facilitate access to innovative products.

➤ SIGNED A MoU WITH THE INTERNATIONAL DIABETES FEDERATION (IDF)

To improve access to affordable and high-quality diabetes medicines in LMICs.

"Regular and affordable access to essential diabetes medicines remains a major problem in many parts of the world. Nearly 100 years after its first use to treat a person with diabetes, insulin remains beyond the reach of many who need it to survive. But it is not only an issue of access to insulin; many other patented medicines that help prevent and treat diabetes and its complications are not getting into the hands of those who need them," said IDF President Professor Andrew Boulton. "MPP's work holds great promise in overcoming some of the barriers to treatment. Our partnership has the potential to bring hope to millions of people with diabetes."

➤ JOINED FORCES WITH THE WORLD HEART FEDERATION (WHF) ON WORLD HEART DAY

To work closely in furthering the shared goal of promoting wide availability of quality, safe, effective and affordable essential medicines for better cardiovascular health.

"WHF's roadmap identifies access to medicines for circulatory health as one of the key tools towards prevention and treatment of cardiovascular diseases (CVDs)," said Jean-Luc Eiselé, Chief Executive Officer, World Heart Federation. "And joining forces with MPP will help us achieve just that".

➤ COMPLETED THE INCLUSION IN MEDSPAL OF MEDICINES ON THE WHO EML

This meant, in particular, the addition of biotherapeutics for NCDs that were added to the WHO EML in 2019⁹.

➤ CO-AUTHORED POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

With the World Heart Federation to improve access to NOACs (non-vitamin K antagonist oral anticoagulants) to make these life-saving innovations affordable and available in low-resource settings. The recommendations were published in the peer-reviewed journal *Global Heart*.

➤ INITIATED AN ASSESSMENT ON A POSSIBLE ROLE FOR MPP IN RELATION TO BIOTHERAPEUTICS

With the inclusion of several biotherapeutics in the WHO EML over the past three revisions, the WHO Expert Committee requested MPP to consider the application of its model to biotherapeutics. In that context, MPP started an assessment that will be concluded in 2021.

⁸ World Health Organization, Fact Sheet, Universal Health Coverage

⁹ These include adalimumab and alternatives certolizumab pegol, etanercept, golimumab and infliximab; nivolumab and alternative pembrolizumab