

# MESSAGE FROM MPP's BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**2020 has been an unprecedented year on so many fronts – from lockdowns and travel bans across countries, to economic slowdowns, to the loss of millions of lives and livelihoods. Amidst this year of grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) turned 10 years old.**



**10 years of our operations brought life-saving impact across 148 countries and saw the distribution of more than 18.55 billion doses of generic medicines facilitated by MPP's licences. Nearly 50 million patient-years of treatment reached people in need, with global health savings of over USD 1.96 billion<sup>1</sup> achieved through the procurement of affordable generic products.**

Each of these enormous numbers is a testament that our model works. Each pill that reached the hands of someone in need is the result of 10 years of partnerships nurtured and strengthened. Each country supplied with generic medicines through MPP's licences is the bottom line of a long success story. Each dollar saved through these licences means more funding available for other treatments and diseases, and further strengthening of countries' health systems.

10 years of experience also brought precious lessons for us as an organisation: such as transforming what many believed was an “impossible idea” and turning it into a trusted mechanism that the global health community can count on; how catalysing the power of partnerships can create a win-win model for all stakeholders; how keeping people at the heart of our activities can push us to harness our creativity to ensure increased innovation, equity, affordability, availability, quality, speed and transparency. Each of these lessons has brought us where we are today and has empowered us for the path ahead.

2020 alone proved to be an eventful year for MPP across disease areas.

○ In HIV, MPP and ViiV Healthcare signed a new licensing agreement to expand access to dolutegravir (DTG)-based regimens for people living with HIV in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Malaysia, all upper-middle-income countries, while Algeria was added to our existing DTG licence.

○ In hepatitis C, MPP and Viartis (through its subsidiary Mylan) signed an agreement to scale up access to the first generic version of the World Health Organization (WHO)-recommended treatment glecaprevir/pibrentasvir; and we called for other manufacturers to apply for a licence to ensure healthy market competition and increase access.

○ In tuberculosis, MPP sublicensed sutezolid, an investigational drug for TB treatment, to the Bill & Melinda Gates Medical Research Institute, thus paving the way for its clinical development.

○ Cutting across these core diseases, MPP partnered with Unitaids grantees, the University of Liverpool, the University of Washington and MedinCell, to increase access to long-acting therapeutics in HIV, TB, HCV and malaria as they become available.

As we push forward in the essential medicines area, MPP bolstered partnerships by formalising Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the International Diabetes Foundation and the World Heart Federation.

○ In the disease that provided the headlines for most of the year, MPP swiftly expanded its mandate in March to cover products for COVID-19. In a pioneering move, the organisation led an open pledge bringing together 21 generic drug makers from around the globe to combine their manufacturing potential towards developing and delivering COVID-19 treatments. Directly as a result of its 10 years of experience and its recognised expertise, MPP was asked to be a part of various global multi-stakeholder initiatives to tackle COVID-19, such as the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) and the WHO COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP).



While new patented medicines for COVID-19 that are both effective and suitable for deployment in low- and middle-income countries are still to appear, and MPP is still, therefore, waiting to sign a licence, MPP and its model have received a large amount of media coverage holding us up as a key mechanism in the battle against this pandemic. This belief in our model has been evidenced by the signing of a new five-year USD 34.3 million grant from Unitaids with its diverse board of countries, foundations, WHO and civil society, as well as by the continued support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.



In this Annual Report 2020, themed “10 years of MPP”, we invite you to delve into our journey over the last 10 years including lessons from the decade and news from 2020. Today, we thank each one of you for partnering with us in every step we took. This report is dedicated to all our partners because you share with us our core understanding that health innovations are only as powerful as they are accessible.

Dr Marie-Paule Kieny  
Chair of MPP's Board

Charles Gore  
Executive Director of MPP

<sup>1</sup> KPMG Report: Jan 2012 – Dec 2020 <https://medicinespatentpool.org/progress-achievements/impact/>

# MESSAGE FROM UNITAID's EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When Unitaid founded MPP ten years ago, few believed the idea of a patent pool for medicines could work. The concept was ground-breaking, inspiring, and held tremendous potential to bring vital medicines to those in need. Ten years later, the impact is there for all to see.

By working closely with partners including pharmaceutical companies – originators and generic manufacturers – MPP's voluntary licensing mechanism has led to the supply of over 18 billion doses of quality generic treatments for HIV and hepatitis C (HCV) to 148 countries.

This diligent work has contributed to making quality-assured, life-saving drugs available at historically low prices, resulting in almost USD 2 billion in savings for LMICs.



Dr Philippe Duneton  
Executive Director, Unitaid



The COVID-19 pandemic has shed a light on key global health challenges such as insufficient production capacity to meet the needs of affordable life-saving tools for all people in all countries. In just a decade, MPP's model of voluntary licensing and patent pooling has proven that it can make a difference and can help overcome those issues.

Working shoulder to shoulder with MPP, we strongly believe that what has been achieved until now to facilitate access to medicines in the South can be repeated against COVID-19. Equitable access to innovative tools everywhere in the world is part of the solution to bring the pandemic to an end. MPP's potential has already gained worldwide recognition first and foremost by countries that benefit directly from MPP's work, as well as WHO, the G7, G20 and the World Economic Forum.

Building on MPP's success and recognising its potential for the future, Unitaid is proud to have renewed its confidence in this model with the recent approval of five-year financial support. Today, maybe more than ever, we need MPP's experience to help pharmaceutical companies license their rights on a voluntary basis and continue to improve access to vital medicines for people who need them the most.

We remain strongly committed to supporting MPP's assiduous work on HIV, HCV and tuberculosis. There is still much to do. Globally, around three in ten people living with HIV are not receiving treatment, only 21% of people with HCV infection have been diagnosed, and even fewer have been treated and cured, and TB kills 1.4 million people per year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further hindered progress. In this context, better access to medicines against these diseases is critical to ensure people in LMICs continue to receive quality and effective care.

Unitaid also looks forward to strengthening its collaboration with MPP on new global health innovations such as long-acting technologies. We support MPP's engagement to explore voluntary licensing opportunities for medicines on the WHO's Model List of Essential Medicines. Unitaid appreciates MPP's achievements over the past decade and looks forward to seeing MPP grow further as a key partner, working with originators, generic manufacturers, countries, donors, health agencies and civil society to improve access to affordable, life-saving products.

## KEY ENDORSEMENTS FOR MPP's WORK

"The Medicines Patent Pool was established as a landmark initiative to expand access to treatments for priority diseases. Over the last decade, MPP has become a strong partner in global health, working to facilitate access to HIV and hepatitis C medicines in low- and middle-income countries through voluntary licensing and patent pooling. With its impressive track record, MPP has a critical role to play in making affordable versions of patented essential medicines and technologies available to those who need it the most, including for COVID-19."

**DR TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS**  
Director-General, World Health Organization

"The creation of the Medicines Patent Pool by Unitaid ten years ago enabled the production of generics that treat tens of millions of people around the world. This led to important successes such as an annual treatment for HIV/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) for less than USD 70 in Africa, instead of USD 10,000 in Europe. Today, maybe more than ever, we need MPP's model to help pharmaceutical companies license their rights on a voluntary basis and continue to save lives."

**MARISOL TOURAINE**  
Chair of the Executive Board, Unitaid

"As the Medicines Patent Pool celebrates its ten-year anniversary, we are proud to support MPP's effort to speed up access to essential medicines in low- and middle-income countries. MPP's voluntary licence mechanism is very much needed, especially in times of the COVID-19 pandemic, as it promotes a collaborative vision of ensuring rapid access of quality-assured affordable essential medicines to people living in low- and middle-income countries while acknowledging the need to fund innovation."

**ALEXANDER SCHULZE**  
Head of the Division Global Programme Health,  
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs,  
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation