



INTERNATIONAL GENERIC AND
BIOSIMILAR MEDICINES ASSOCIATION

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For immediate release

COVID-19: IGBA calls for urgent PRIORITY DESIGNATION FOR MEDICINES at custom controls and for cargo and freight

The International Generic and Biosimilar medicines Association (IGBA), which represents global manufacturers of generic and biosimilar medicines, today requests urgent action by all governments to designate all medicines as PRIORITY ESSENTIAL PRODUCTS, including all critical goods needed to manufacture them, so as to ensure that patients around the globe can continue to access the medicines they need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given the surge in demand, in particular for Intensive Care Unit (ICU) medicines, there is an absolute urgency to facilitate and speed up the movement of essential products at all levels, in particular at customs control, as well as systematically reserve cargo capacity for those products in air/sea cargo, which are vital partners in delivering much-needed essential goods.

“While it is important to maintain close coordination across borders and prevent protectionism, we need effective “green lanes” around the world and across the entire supply chain”, commented Hanan Sboul, IGBA Chair. “We see encouraging signs of international commitments, collaboration and coordination to support the movement of medicines, but additional concrete steps need to be urgently implemented worldwide to make it systematically happen”.

“To speed up customs control, governments should identify commodity codes for the relevant products and put measures in place promptly to ensure their speedy processing in line with normal customs procedures”. Furthermore we need measures to free up shipping containers”, she added.

“Following the dramatic reduction in commercial air passenger flights that normally carry pharmaceutical goods and the consequential significant increase in costs for air and sea cargo, governments should systematically reserve cargo capacity at affordable prices for priority essential products”, Sboul stressed.

The PRIORITY ESSENTIAL PRODUCTS for the green lanes set-up should cover:

- Finished medicines
- Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs)
- Starting chemicals
- Standard material for release testing
- Critical packaging material
- Critical manufacturing equipment and spare parts
- Critical final assembly components and materials
- Personal Protection Equipment for workers’ safety
- Plastic wrapping & pallets
- Sampling product flow to allow the work of external QC laboratories
- Patient support service materials (Sharps bins, training pens, etc.)

For freight, it needs to be ensured that:

- Trucks and drivers are not quarantined based on origin or route (i.e. if they are from or have passed through a risk area);
- The border crossings with green lanes are publicly and widely communicated by governments;
- The requirements and operational details to use the green lanes are widely communicated and practically feasible, for example via an identification banner for trucks carrying essential goods;
- Special conditions for drivers operating these trucks are communicated such as speedy medical checks for drivers delivering to a country and no medical check for drivers passing through a country;
- Emergency/humanitarian corridors are created for trucks passing through countries;
- Safe handover hubs are set up to securely transfer goods;
- Governments provide universal access to public hand hygiene stations (WHO recommendation).

Furthermore, it needs to be ensured that cross-border workers are still allowed to commute despite lock-down and that factory workers and technical personnel are included in the list of people excluded from the general lock-down.

“Governments have seen that cargo and freight are an essential part of the actions against COVID-19, urgent additional steps are now needed to speed up the movement of medicines. Our member associations continue to reach out with implementing measures and proposals,” concluded Suzette Kox, IGBA Secretary General.

See also:

- [WHO Country & Technical Guidance - Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [IGBA urgent recommendations to keep medicine supply chains flowing \(27 March 2020\)](#)
- [COVID-19 / Urgent call to governments - Air freight must reopen for critical medicines and supplies for their manufacture \(23 March 2020\)](#)
- [COVID-19: Critical to keep the supply chain of essential medicines manufacturing operating at full capacity \(18 March 2020\)](#)

About IGBA

The International Generic and Biosimilar medicines Association (IGBA) was founded to strengthen cooperation between associations representing manufacturers of generic and biosimilar medicines from around the world. The IGBA is at the forefront of preserving sustainable competition within our industry, by stimulating competitiveness and innovation in the pharmaceutical sector; thereby, ensuring millions of patients around the world have access to high quality, pro-competitive medicines. For more details, regarding IGBA and its member associations, see the IGBA website at: www.igbamedicines.org.



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