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We would like to welcome the process and engagement of WHO in the difficult and multisectoral area of innovation and intellectual property rights and the development of the current plan of action. We welcome, in particular, the global role of WHO in this process and emphasise the need to recognise that in a globalising world there is a need to strengthen global action in the field of health and research and development for health. We would also like to emphasise that ability to guide R&D on the basis of health priorities is not an issue of concern only with developing countries needs as substantial and repeated concern has been put to research on antimicrobials due to problems of antimicrobial resistance. Innovation is not the sole propriety of product development and we would in this context also wish to emphasise the scope and importance of innovations in regulatory measures, resource gathering and other health and social interventions. Achieving innovative products is not sufficient as such, but these need to respond to health needs, be cost-effective and provide benefits in comparison to existing products. Supporting access to pharmaceuticals needs to be seen in the broader context of health policy priorities and health system functions. The strategy still considers health systems and global disease control programmes predominantly as delivery and financing channels for new health products, which leads to a problematic emphasis as well as undermining rational use of pharmaceuticals. Globalisation and increasing integration of global economy has its repercussions in health. We would like to have more explicit recognition that governments need to have sufficient policy space for regulatory action and measures in health and in particular, pharmaceutical policies, in order to fulfil their public health obligations and responsibilities as part of the strategy. Maintaining policy space for health requires also support, improved action and understanding of the issues at global level. In the full statement we highlight four core elements of importance and highlight particular issues in these fields. These issues, we believe, would be prioritising research and development, ensuring policy space for health, supporting access to medicines in the broader context of health policies and rational use of medicines and assessing and enhancing new mechanisms to promote innovation that are responsive to health and health policy needs.