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Technology Transfer and Global Innovation Update *By* *Natalie Coon*

In April of 2020, the G20 Action Plan was established as a living document to guide the world into recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. One year later, the Action Plan was revised to create a list of tasks intended to prepare for a strong and sustainable economic recovery as soon as the COVID-19 pandemic was no longer considered a state of immediate emergency per the World Health Organization. By increasing communication with and following recommendations of multilateral organizations such as the World Health Organization, policies would increase in coherence and cooperation was to be enhanced (G20 2021). This plan consisted of commitments to health, supporting and shaping economic recovery, supporting vulnerable economies, and protecting the planet (G20 2021). Intended to serve as a model for policy creation, this plan was created to lead the world toward a resilient social structure while avoiding any national collapse.

The G20 declared their commitment to quickly facilitating COVID-19 vaccines that were safe, effective, and affordable to all people (G20 2021). Fully aligning themselves with the guidelines of the World Health Organization. Additionally, the G20 endorsed the necessity of the ACT-Accelerator and Covax Facility. The ACT-Accelerator partnership focuses on research advancements and government development with an emphasis on coordinating a dramatic decrease in the COVID-19 virus (WHO 2022). Although both the G20 and the WHO recognized the equity gap in accessing critical health tools, the global health crisis was still tackled by the WHO as the COVAX facility expedited rapid tests and vaccine production (WHO 2022). However, the equity gap, influenced not only by social class and country but also discrimination of race and gender, remains prevalent in the global healthcare industry.

As COVID-19 prevention tools are still being distributed in 2023, the cost of funding the ACT Accelerator continues to rise. The ACT Accelerator identified its grant funding gap to reach \$22 billion, which the G20 expressed significant economic concern

for (Agarwal, Gopinath 2021). Staff members of the International Monetary Fund estimated that \$13 billion worth of vaccine donations, investment, and upfront financing would be required to finance a proposal to combat the COVID-19 virus, where \$35 billion was expected from private donors by 2025 (Agarwal, Gopinath 2021).

The G20 meeting of November 2022 partially discussed the humanitarian concerns of global immunization. The G20 acknowledged the Ministerial Declaration on the World Trade Organization Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Preparedness for Future Pandemics, and the Ministerial Decision on the TRIPS Agreement, further collaborating with multilateral organizations (White House 2022). Additionally, they recognized that regional and local vaccine production locations needed support to increase the speed and capacity of distribution, especially in countries with lower economic strength. The G20 announced support of the WHO mRNA Vaccine Technology Transfer Hub to increase research internationally and spread effective vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics (VTDs) among developing countries (White House 2022).

Concerned by the digital economy's recent advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning, the G20 began to research policies to allow new medical technologies to be distributed. The G20 addressed intellectual property rights, data protection, and consumer privacy when considering sustainable development with humanitarian concerns in mind (White House 2022). However, even with protections and policies in place, advancements in technology have only increased. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly important to specify guidelines and courses of action for breaches of data protection.

The newest developments of the September 2023 G20 meeting include discussions of healthcare technology in preparation for a future health crisis. The G20 indicated the necessity of delivering medical countermeasures (MCM) to ensure the world is prepared to handle a critical pandemic situation like COVID-19 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2023). The concept of "Data Free Flow with Trust" would reduce the risk of generative AI among cybersecurity conflicts while utilizing the most important and efficient means of using technology to make a widespread positive impact (MOFA 2023). Nonetheless, the current lack of technological updates in disadvantaged nations combined with the extensive lack of security and technological knowledge in developed countries yields numerous unsolved problems that will impact G20 resolutions for years to come.

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