

Knowledge Ecology International

Agenda item 7 - Patents and health

The WIPO secretariat needs to provide useful and timely advice to countries struggling to address intellectual property barriers in the development, manufacturing and accessing of new services and products to prevent and treat COVID-19 related illnesses. The new COVID-19 IP tracker is a start, but more can be done.

The Director General should address this issue, in the context of the need to scale manufacturing capacity and provide affordable access to all of relevant technologies. In particular, in relation to patents and health, WIPO should examine what technology transfer is necessary to enable broad access to COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics, and other health technologies.

Finally, we recommend the Committee discuss the role of patents in the development of, and access, to new cell and gene therapies, such as CAR T treatments for cancer. Among the topics to be considered are the extent to which patent exceptions for the treatment of humans apply, as well as the high costs, and of the anti-competitive nature of licensing the emerging thickets of patents for these treatments.