IGBA Statement on the Final Report of the United Nations Secretary General's High Level Panel on Access to Medicines

November 15, 2016 – Geneva, Switzerland – The International Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association (IGBA) believes that generic and biosimilar medicines can play a fundamental role in improving access to high quality medicines for patients worldwide.

Promoting access to medicines is an important global priority, and is critical to advancing United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote the well-being of all people of all ages.

The IGBA commends United Nations Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon for initiating this High Level Panel on Access to Medicines to promote greater access to health technologies across the globe. The IGBA was pleased to provide recommendations to the High Level Panel, both in writing and in public events held in London and Johannesburg.

While we appreciate references to the needed coordination on addressing health needs and the serious issues related to Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR), we regret that two key IGBA recommendations for improving access to medicines were not included in the final report – the need for governments to work towards global regulatory convergence and the need to provide market incentives to promote competition from generic and biosimilar medicine manufacturers.

Increased convergence of regulatory requirements for generic and biosimilar medicines would help ensure the quality of medicine while removing unnecessary duplications and costs for both the industry and regulators. This would have the effect of accelerating access to generic and biosimilar medicines for patients post-patent/exclusivity, improving regulatory science through international cooperation between medicine agencies and reducing drug development costs.

Incentives to promote generic and biosimilar competition immediately after patent or exclusivity expiry are essential to improve access to medicines for better health. Data from the EU shows that generic medicines have doubled the access to medicines for patients over a 10 year period. Similarly, biosimilar filgrastim (a drug to support chemotherapy patients) increased access to this important therapy by 44% in the EU. Governments should adopt policy levers to drive generic and biosimilar competition, including effective systems to challenge weak or invalid patents and pricing and reimbursement incentives.

About IGBA

The International Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association (IGBA) was founded as IGPA (International Generic Pharmaceutical Alliance) in March 1997 to strengthen cooperation between associations representing manufacturers of generic medicines. Its membership includes Medicines for Europe (Europe), the CGPA (Canada), the GPhA (USA), the JAPM (Jordan), the NAPM (South Africa), the TGPA (Taiwan) and the JGA (Japan) while the associations from Australia (GBMA), Brazil (ProGenericos), Malaysia (MOPI) and Mexico (AMEGI) are Associate Members. The IGBA is at the forefront of stimulating competitiveness and innovation in the pharmaceutical sector by providing high quality pro-competitive medicines to millions of patients around the world. Through its constituent member associations, the IGBA maintains constant dialogue with government authorities as well as with international institutions such as WTO, WIPO and WHO. More information: www.igbamedicines.com.

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