

## Untapped potential of generics industry to expand access to people living in low- and middle-income countries, reveals new report

**AMSTERDAM & LONDON, Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023:** The Access to Medicine Foundation, an independent non-profit that seeks to mobilise companies to expand access to their essential healthcare products in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) has published [a landmark report](#) assessing five generic and biosimilar medicine manufacturers' actions on expanding access to their products in LMICs.

The Foundation, together with Stewart Investors, an active, long-only equity specialist focused on long-term sustainable investing, co-hosted a multi-stakeholder launch event in Mumbai to mark the publication of the report.

Generic and biosimilar medicines have the potential to be lifelines for millions, offering the same therapeutic and clinical benefits as the originator medicines, but often at significantly lower prices. However, even if a product is comparatively cheaper, payers may still be unable to afford it, which is especially the case for those living in low-income countries and those from vulnerable populations. Among the medicines listed on the World Health Organization's Model List of Essential Medicines, only 10% are under patent protection, highlighting the essential role of generic and biosimilar medicine manufacturers in ensuring their products reach those who need them the most.

To assess what is currently being done by the generics industry to expand access to medicine in LMICs, the report profiles five market-leading companies: Cipla, Hikma, Sun Pharma, Teva, and Viartis. Along with detailed company profiles, it identifies opportunities to strengthen manufacturing and improve the availability of generic and biosimilar medicines.

The report, which marks the first time that any generic or biosimilar medicine manufacturers have been assessed in-depth on their access-to-medicine efforts, reveals areas where companies can focus their attention as they step up efforts to expand access to their essential medicine, such as affordability, product registration, supply, local availability, and adaptive R&D. Given their portfolios and footprints, the five companies assessed can now work to significantly enhance their efforts by acting on the opportunities and the tailored recommendations set out in their respective company profiles.

### Roadmap to improving access to generics

In Mumbai, India, a multi-stakeholder launch event this week marked the report's official release. The event convened experts and stakeholders from various fields, including investors, policymakers, pharmaceutical companies and global health organisations, with the aim of building a consensus on priorities and necessary actions to ensure sustainable, continuous, and affordable access to essential medicines. Jayasree K. Iyer, CEO, Access to Medicine Foundation, was joined alongside Sujaya Desai, analyst and portfolio manager at Stewart Investors, to discuss the findings in more detail and called for improvements within the industry to expand access to generic products around the world.

**Sujaya Desai, analyst and portfolio manager at Stewart Investors,** said: *"As long-term investors focused on quality and sustainability, we think generics franchises built on providing access to high-quality medicines at affordable prices are set to benefit from continued growth tailwinds over the coming*

*decades. While these companies create tangible benefits for end users, we recognise areas for improvement within the industry, which is why we support the Foundation's work to help provide a roadmap of how access to generics can be enhanced.*

*We are excited about the opportunity for generics companies to continue delivering greater access to healthcare globally while operating sustainably profitable business models."*

**Jayasree K. Iyer, CEO, Access to Medicine Foundation,** also commented: *"When it comes to expanding access to medicine, the power of the generics industry is often underestimated. It's more than the transactional relationship of selling drugs at volume and competing on price. Companies must engage with the unmet medical need globally – for example, by working with local manufacturers to improve supply, taking steps to safeguard quality, making their essential products available in more countries, and addressing affordability for the poorest patients.*

*We hope that by working alongside leading sustainable investors such as Stewart Investors, we can help to drive the industry forward and guide pharmaceutical companies to do more for the people living in low- and middle-income countries."*

This report is part of the Access to Medicine Foundation's Generic & Biosimilar Medicines Programme, which was developed to guide and stimulate generic and biosimilar medicine manufacturers to deepen their efforts to expand access to essential medicines in LMICs.

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#### **About Stewart Investors**

Founded in 1988, Stewart Investors is an active, long-only equity manager focused on sustainable investing. Based in Edinburgh, the firm also has offices in London, Singapore, New York and Sydney.

For more information, please visit: [www.stewartinvestors.com](http://www.stewartinvestors.com)

#### **About Access to Medicine Foundation**

The Access to Medicine Foundation is an independent non-profit organisation that seeks to transform the healthcare ecosystem by motivating and mobilising companies to expand access to their essential healthcare products in low- and middle-income countries. The Foundation is funded by the Dutch and UK governments, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust, and AXA Investment Managers.

For more information, please visit: [www.accesstomedicinefoundation.org](http://www.accesstomedicinefoundation.org)

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