

1994



20-YEAR PATENTS FOR MEDS

South Africa signs TRIPS* agreeing to provide 20-year patents on medicines

2001



DOHA** PUTS PATIENTS OVER PROFITS

WTO member countries declare that governments should use TRIPS safeguards to protect health over patents

2002-2009



VICTORY FOR AFFORDABLE ARVS

TAC and SECTION27's Competition Commission challenges against patents allow generic ARVs in South Africa, toppling prices

2009



SOUTH AFRICA ANNOUNCES LAW REFORM

Government announces plans to reform the country's patent laws

2011



ABUSIVE PATENTS REVEALED

Report reveals that 80% of patents granted in South Africa are not new or innovative



CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED FOR AFFORDABLE MEDS

TAC, MSF and SECTION27 launch campaign to reform the patent laws with TRIPS safeguards to protect health

2013



DRAFT INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY RELEASED

South African government finally releases draft policy that commits to reforming patent laws to improve access to affordable generic meds

2014



PHARMAGATE!

Media exposes Big Pharma plot to sabotage reform of South Africa's patent laws. Health Minister calls plot "satanic"



CALL TO ACTION

People take to the streets across the country to demand end to delays in finalising IP policy

2015



A GROWING MOVEMENT

Frustrated with delays, more patient groups join the campaign to reform the patent laws



PHARMA PUSH BACK

Big Pharma use AGOA trade negotiations with the US to pressure South Africa to abandon law reform to protect health



WHY ARE WE WAITING?

Two years after release of draft IP policy, still no finalised policy in sight. Many people in South Africa left unable to access the medicines they need

TRIPS* is an international agreement that sets the standards of intellectual property (IP) protection that member countries of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) are required to provide. TRIPS requires that countries provide 20-year patents (which are a form of IP) on products and processes that are new and innovative. While TRIPS requires that countries grant 20-year patents on new medicines, it also contains safeguards to protect health over patents. The 2001 Doha** Declaration reaffirmed the right of WTO member countries to use these safeguards. South Africa's laws provide 20-year patents but do not contain all the necessary safeguards to protect health. The Fix the Patent Laws (FTPL) coalition is campaigning for SA to fully adopt safeguards to protect health into its national laws, in order to improve access to affordable medicines. The FTPL coalition is comprised of 18 patient groups in South Africa who have witnessed first-hand how South Africa's IP laws block access to affordable medicines.