

Statement by Medicus Mundi International to the open-ended meeting of Member States on the follow up of the CEWG report

Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to address the Assembly on behalf of Medicus Mundi International and Health Innovation in Practice.

First, we would like to thank the Secretariat for its report and for its efforts to provide concrete, workable options for WHO Member States to consider in view of the implementation of the CEWG recommendations.

Collecting evidence, reliable and credible, and sharing information, transparently and inclusively, is the essential first step for guiding decision-making on priorities for health R&D and allocating resources accordingly. This calls for proper incentives, and the strengthening of national capacities to ensure the quality of the data collected. It requires appropriate support from donors and external partners, as well as political will and governments' priority investment.

The information then needs to be aggregated and directed to a trusted coordinating body that will define R&D priorities. This does not necessarily require a new structure with demands in human and financial resources. We believe a lot could be done with better networking the existing institutions and initiatives. This calls for designing an appropriate collaboration and coordination mechanism between the relevant existing structures, and mostly relies on political will and mutual trust.

In other words, many positive changes can readily be implemented that will improve, with reasonable additional financial and labour costs, the situation analysis and priority setting of health R&D. However, this cannot take place without strengthening developing countries' capacities to analyse, monitor and voice their needs. But above all, we want to stress that, as good as the information sharing, priority setting and collective planning of health R&D may become, it will be of no use if it does not directly translate into a reallocation of R&D funds for health that are sustainable and predictable.

In view of the diverse positions reflected in the regional consultations report, we are concerned that no consensus will be found yet on a way for member states to pool and direct their funds towards collectively decided priorities. The lack of agreement on the format of contributions should not be a stumbling block and member countries should start working on the elements of a binding framework for health R&D at the earliest. The time has come for a real change in mentalities and practices, for better articulating efforts towards a recognised common goal, improving developing countries' access to health. We urge member states not to further delay the implementation of the long awaited, pertinent recommendations of the CEWG. We urgently need solutions that provide sustainability and predictability of financing for needs-driven R&D.

Thank you for your attention

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