

Medicus Mundi International

Meeting: Seventy-first World Health Assembly (A71/1)

Agenda Item: 11.8 Preparation for a high-level meeting of the General Assembly on ending tuberculosis

Statement:

MMI takes this opportunity to address agenda 11.8. The statement is supported by PHM.

We commend WHO and MS for setting the ambitious goal of ending TB and for expressing their commitment towards this in the Moscow Declaration. In anticipation of the discussions to be organized at the High Level meeting at the UNGA, we would like to raise 3 major concerns.

The Moscow declaration has pointed to the need to address the broader social determinants of TB. However concrete ways of addressing these are yet to be outlined. The spread of TB is primarily dependent on conditions of living and the socio-economic environment. Ending TB is not merely a medical issue and it is imperative that the high-level meeting propose concrete actions to address key social determinants of TB such as poor nutrition, housing and living conditions.

Robust health systems are the second imperative of the end TB strategy. The current model of insurance based UHC, adopted in several countries, is largely based around the participation of the private sector in provision of care. Evidence from high incidence countries suggests that TB treatment in private facilities is often irrational. Best results in TB management and control are to be found in countries with robust public systems. We urge MS to support health systems that are primarily public and are designed around the principles of Comprehensive Primary Health Care.

After a decades long gap new TB drugs are now ready to enter TB treatment regimens. These drugs would be invaluable additions, especially while treating XDR and MDR TB patients. Unfortunately these drugs are protected by patents and hence too expensive for individual patients as well for countries in which TB prevalence is high. Given the public health importance of TB we urge MS and the WHO to support a waiver on patent protection on all new TB medicines.