

**Meeting:** Executive Board 142

**Agenda Item:** 4.1 Global snakebite burden

**Statement:**

Thank you, Chair. Medicus Mundi International would like to take this opportunity to address agenda item 4.1. This statement is supported by the People's Health Movement.

We welcome the inclusion of Global Snakebite burden in the agenda. EB 142/17, speaks to the need for good quality antivenoms which are also affordable. Every year, poisoning from snakebites accounts for as many as 138 000 deaths and 400 000 cases of lasting disability; in over 2 million more people, it provokes serious illness.

Evidently the real burden of morbidity and mortality related to snakebites is felt by the poorest and the marginalized in the affected regions. Any intervention regarding snakebites needs to also focus on strengthening primary healthcare structures and capacity building of health workers, at all levels of care and importantly at the primary level.

In order to ensure manufacture of good quality venoms we urge WHO to develop regulatory standards and guidelines. Access to treatment following snakebites is often out of the reach of a majority of those affected. We urge MS to streamline their response to the problem of snakebite by formulating and supporting plans for building capacity for manufacture of safe, good quality and effective antivenoms.

Evidence of lack of adequate research on the issue of snakebite and manufacture of antivenoms indicates that this is yet another example of the failure of a market driven R&D system. Clearly snakebite needs to be viewed on par with other neglected diseases.