

**Statement by Medicus Mundi International
to the 135th session of the WHO Executive Board
on agenda item 5.2 regarding Air Pollution to be delivered by Katrien de Troeyer**

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Board on behalf of Medicus Mundi International and its partner organisation People's Health Movement. We appreciate this note and urge WHO to strengthen the health sector's engagement around clean air policy and practice.

There are wide differences with respect to people's exposure to air pollution. Urban populations in developing country megacities and women cooking with open fuels compare sharply with the conditions in the rich countries. Any set of strategies for change must redress the causes of such inequities.

Swelling urbanisation is an important driver of air pollution and we point to rural electrification, investment in rural education and support for small farmers as strategies for restraining urbanisation.

We also urge attention to the geographic distribution of pollution within global production chains. It is too easy for transnational corporations to displace polluting production to L&MICs.

We endorse the strategies listed in EB135/4 but note that the document does not address the political challenge of effecting change in this field. Retooling the household, urban and industrial infrastructure which generates air pollution will involve costs and will confront opposition.

We urge that in the development of this strategy attention is paid to the development of meaningful partnerships with civil society organisations and in particular organisations from the communities who have most to gain. This includes workers who are exposed to air pollution in unsafe mines and workplaces. It also includes the industries which offer reduced pollution in the kitchens, on the roads and in the workplaces.

There are significant international dimensions to this project. Ensuring open channels for technology transfer and providing support for innovation will be critical. Strong international norms regarding air quality are needed to protect regulators from corporate intimidation under investor state dispute settlement provisions in trade and investment agreements. We urge full consideration to the role of binding international instruments to achieve change, as opposed to voluntary codes of conduct.

Thank you