

**Statement by Medicus Mundi International  
to the 66th session of the World Health Assembly  
on agenda item 16.1 Global Vaccine Action Plan  
delivered by Susana Barria**

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the opportunity to address the distinguished members of the World Health Assembly on behalf of Medicus Mundi International and the People's Health Movement.

WHO is to be congratulated on its excellent work in promoting appropriate vaccination policies. However, we have concerns regarding the proposed framework for monitoring, evaluation and accountability.

The promotion of immunization should not be treated as an aim in itself. Immunisation is one of many tools for communicable disease control, including water, sanitation and adequate nutrition. Immunisation without attention to the social determinants of communicable disease carries the risk of simply shifting the cause of death. The proposed indicators do not locate the vaccination targets within any broader picture of disease control.

We are concerned about the pressures on countries to adopt a uniform global schedule of immunisation without regard to the disease burden, cost structures and health system priorities in countries. The cost effectiveness of vaccines and immunization campaigns need to be evaluated case by case in the specific country context. WHO should be supporting countries to undertake their own cost-effectiveness evaluations.

The Vaccine Action Plan does not give due weight to the development of vaccine research and production technology in developing countries. Technology transfer and the development of local production capacity are important conditions for national security in the event of pandemics and sovereign control over population health needs. This aspect does not find a mention in the report.

Finally, we are concerned that the Action Plan does not refer to the role of health systems and the necessity to strengthen them in order to ensure delivery of immunization services. Health systems are the backbone of any health strategy.

Vaccination should not be treated as a single technical fix which achieves improved health without addressing the underlying social, economic and environmental determinants of health or building robust effective health systems, based on primary health care. The availability of donor funding to support vaccination while other important areas languish for want of funds illustrates the dangers of the WHO's over-reliance on donor funding.

Thank you.