

WHO Watch

WHO Watch is a project of the People's Health Movement, a global network of civil society groups held together by the vision of Health for All

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WHO Watch is a resource for advocacy, a platform for mobilisation and a people's intervention in global health governance.

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Statement By CMC/PHM at WHA65 on NCDs Agenda item 13.1

Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to address the distinguished members of the WHA on behalf of Churches Action for Health and the People's Health Movement.

Here in WHO we are talking about NCDs. Meanwhile investor protection provisions are being included in trade agreements. These are making the prospects for effective regulation of the global agri-food industry very much dimmer. The use by Big Tobacco of investor state dispute settlement provisions to attack Australia's plain packaging regulations, should be a warning to policy makers who see a role for industry regulation in the prevention and control of NCDs.

While we are discussing chronic disease management, provisions being included in trade agreements to further extend patent durations, maintain high prices for medicines. While we know that poverty is associated with higher rates of NCDs, neoliberal economic policies currently being implemented are leading to wider inequalities in income and health.

There is a mention of trade and industry factors in the global strategy but there is no commitment to effective action on this front. WHO has a mandate to work on the social and economic determinants of NCDs and to work towards policy coherence across health and trade. The determinants of NCDs locate in diverse fields: trade, food, agriculture, urban development and taxation policies. We urge MS to strengthen the commitment to action in relation to these issues.

The development of the global strategy has involved close collaboration with a range of private enterprise players. In this connection the new provisions regarding conflict of interest promised under the WHO Reform Program are urgently needed.

Transparency and integrity in these relationships are important at the national as well as the global level and need to be observed in the academic and research sector as well as in policy making.

Thank you chair.