

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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Draft statement by CMC and People's Health Movement on the Social Determinants of Health (Item number 13.6) to be presented by Meike Schleiff of the People's Health Movement

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.

Action on the SDH is a critical requirement for achieving Health for All but has been put at risk by the new priorities framework being implemented as part of the WHO Reform Program.

There is no provision in the draft framework for the General Program of Work for the planning, budgeting and accountability with respect to cross-cutting issues such as the right to health, gender equity and the social determinants of health. There is a serious risk that WHO's work in these fields will be allowed to wither.

WHO is properly concerned with measurement and evaluation. However, unless the indicators adopted for monitoring various programs are disaggregated using meaningful stratifiers, progress on the social determinants of health, if progress there be, remains invisible.

WHO has a leading responsibility to demonstrate leadership on the social determinants of health within the UN system including in other UN deliberations and programs, such as Rio+20 and the post-2015 development framework. There is a need to further develop the capacity of the Secretariat to provide technical assistance in the implementation of the Rio Declaration. We urge Member States to ensure the necessary funding for the work on the social determinants of health.

The Health in All Policies approach requires that the social determinants of health in fields as diverse as trade, taxation, TNCs, financial institutions, and privatization are considered and addressed.

The social determination of health is much more than a collection of fragmented and isolated "determinants" associated with classic risk factors and individual lifestyles. We must recognize that behind those symptoms and effects lies an ideology whose ultimate goal is the commercialization of life itself.

Thank you, Chair.