

**Statement by Medicus Mundi International
to the 66th session of the World Health Assembly
on agenda item 17.2 Follow-up of the report of the Consultative Expert Working Group on
Research and Development: Financing and Coordination
delivered by Alice Fabbri**

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

We wish to congratulate the WHO on providing leadership to the entire process to promote "Health R&D" in a framework that delinks the cost of innovation from access to health products. Many Member States have played a commendable role in developing a Global Strategy and Plan of Action, elements of which have been elaborated as practical actions in the report of the CEWG. The resolution on the follow up of the CEWG report represents a necessary step forward in this process.

We wish, however, to bring to the notice of Member States some concerns regarding the resolution. The resolution proposes some concrete actions, including the establishment of a global health R&D observatory and the implementation of a few health R&D demonstration projects.

For these actions to be translated into real change, greater clarity is necessary. It is necessary that these projects are coherent with the principles outlined in the GSPA and the CEWG report, including the principles of open innovation and the delinking of the costs of innovation from the price of health products. The terms of engagement with private for-profit entities need to be clarified, so as not to replicate the negative features of the present IP based framework of conducting research.

While the actions proposed in the resolution are small steps forward, fundamental changes in the landscape of innovative activity related to health products, require more decisive and bold measures. While we continue to 'observe' and 'demonstrate', millions will die not because new products cannot be designed to prevent many unnecessary deaths, but because we are still to develop systems of innovation that privilege human lives over patents and profits.

Real action continues to elude us, even a decade after the WHO set up the CIPIH to initiate a process to stimulate development of new R&D models that would address the unmet needs for new products, especially among poor patients. The GSPA had constructed a roadmap to redeem the promise of the CIPIH report. At the heart of its recommendations lies the call to commence discussions on a global R&D treaty. We are disheartened that the proposed resolution falls far short of expectations by postponing discussions on the R&D treaty.

We urge member states to take a decision that is based on the consideration that we can save many lives tomorrow if we choose to act today. We urge member states to set a clear date, in the next few months, when discussions on the global R&D treaty can be initiated.

Thank you!