

**Statement to the 69<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly**

**Agenda item 15.1 Draft global health sector strategies: HIV (A69/31), Viral Hepatitis (A69/32), Sexually Transmitted diseases (A69/33)**

Thank you Chair for this opportunity to address distinguished delegates on behalf of Medicus Mundi International and People's Health Movement.

We welcome the three Draft Global Health Sector Strategies. However, they are deficient in explaining how the strategies would effectively overcome some key barriers.

There is a need to fast track upscaling of the response to AIDS that need new money largely to be mobilized from domestic source. The strategy is silent on the ability of LMICs to raise such resources under the chokehold of the current global economic structures.

The Hepatitis Strategy doesn't address the barriers related to the very high monopoly costs of diagnostics and drugs treating HBV and HCV. Nor addressed are barriers to provision of clean drinking water and adequate sanitation in low resource and emergency settings.

There exists today a real opportunity to eradicate Hepatitis C but the promise of recently launched drugs such as Sofosbuvir is effectively nullified by the extremely high market prices of these drugs and the lack of strategies to promote low cost generics in all parts of the world afflicted with high levels of Hepatitis C incidence.

We urge the WHO to provide technical support to member states to decisively use TRIPS flexibilities to promote introduction of low cost generic versions of the newly introduced anti Hepatitis C drugs. It is beyond belief that a single pill of Sofosbuvir was marketed at a price of a 1000 dollars a pill when evidence suggested that a three month course of the same drug should cost around a hundred dollars.

Low income countries struggle today to keep alive even the existing immunisation schedules. In such a context the STI strategy needs to fully consider the opportunity cost of adding Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine to the routine immunization schedule.

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