

**Statement by Medicus Mundi International  
to the 132<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Executive Board  
on Agenda Item 6.2, Draft action plan for the prevention and  
control of noncommunicable diseases 2013-2020**



Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to address the distinguished members of the WHO Executive Board on behalf of Medicus Mundi International and the People's Health Movement.

We welcome the action plan and its commitment to a coordinated and comprehensive implementation of strategies to prevent and control noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). The document recognizes that important factors shaping the NCDs epidemic lie outside the reach of health policy and that most health gains will be made by influencing domains such as social position, income, education, occupation, and gender. However, a broad and effective social determinant approach is only weakly embedded in the comprehensive global monitoring framework. Moreover, the narrow focus on four diseases and four behavioral risk factors entails the risk of promoting a vertical approach, rather than a more broadly integrated primary health care one.

Further, the proposed strategy might create an artificial fragmentation in the approach to different chronic conditions. This is demonstrated by the choice of addressing NCDs, mental health and visual impairment through different action plans. We would like to consider in the future an integration of all action plans concerning the prevention and control of NCDs.

Finally, we would like to express our concern regarding the proposed engagement with partners in the private sector, in work related to prevention and control of NCDs. We welcome that the tobacco industry is explicitly excluded and there is a growing awareness - as Dr Chan highlighted - that *"many of the threats to health that contribute to NCDs come from corporations"*. We call upon Member States to ensure an effective management of potential conflict of interests arising from the engagement with corporations representing agribusiness, beverage and pharmaceutical industries. In particular we are concerned about the influence pharmaceutical industries might have in shaping the research agenda and the public health strategies. We call upon Member State to carry out independent analyses and evaluations of the efficacy, safety, cost-effectiveness and feasibility of public health measures – including pharmaceutical interventions - in their own contexts.

Thank you.