

**Statement by Medicus Mundi International  
to the 130<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Board  
on additional agenda item: Rio +20**

Honourable chair, distinguished delegates, thank you for the opportunity to address the EB on behalf of MMI and the People's Health Movement

We very much welcome the addition of this agenda item and look forward to a more prominent role of the health sector in the preparations for Rio+20. As noted in the background document prepared by the Secretariat, the zero draft outcome document of the Rio Conference that came out last week hardly mentions health. This needs to change. The conference provides an unprecedented opportunity to improve health, by putting equity at the center of sustainable development. Despite progress made in specific disease areas, the current development framework has failed to address the ever widening inequalities between and within countries. Focusing on equity will do more for health than any new fund, alliance or partnership. And it is also central for sustainable development and so provides a base for engagement with other sectors. Equity is your common denominator. Honorable delegates, Director General, you need to prepare for this debate. We call upon you to be a strong advocate for health and equity in your own government and to give WHO a clear mandate to help you prepare for the difficult and complex debate that lies ahead of you. WHO's department for PHE and Health in the Green Economy initiative could carry out this task.

This being said, we believe it is unfortunate that the decision on your table aims only to ensure that health will have a bearing on Rio+20; and not vice versa. The importance of sustainable development for health has been acknowledged several times during this EB, when talking about MDGs, SDH and NCDs, but it has not yet come to an organized debate. As you are engaging in priority setting and the post-MDG area is approaching, time has come to have a discussion at the 65<sup>th</sup> WHA on the place of sustainable development in the future work of this organization, considering the contributions this would make to improving health and equity.

Thank you.