Medicus Mundi International

Meeting: Seventy-first World Health Assembly (A71/1)
Agenda Item: 11.7 Preparation for the third High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, to be held in 2018

Statement:

Medicus Mundi International takes this opportunity to address agenda item 11.7. This statement is supported by the PHM.

We find the preliminary report, A71/14, on WHO's Global Coordination Mechanism relevant and useful but of limited effectiveness. The report points to the lack of consensus among member states regarding whether and how to address barriers to progress in the prevention and control of NCDs, as well as the widening inequalities between HICs and LMICs.

The report shows that the WHO Secretariat has the tools to greatly strengthen intersectoral awareness around NCDs at the national level and across the UN system, but WHO's work on NCDs continues to be severely underfunded. Developing tools for implementation is an important first step, but tools are by no means sufficient in themselves. We urge this Assembly to consider increasing the budgetary allocation for prevention and control of NCDs.

We support the report's strong focus on upstream drivers associated with structural, political, and economic factors, but drivers such as social inequities and underlying genetic factors need further explication.

We are disappointed that concrete measures to control the activities of many health harming industries have not been identified. While SDH and global trade are drivers of the rapid rise in the incidence of NCDs, WHOs own capacity and work on SDH and Trade and Health have been significantly ramped down. We urge the WHO to reinstitute these technical capacities.

New drugs, especially biological drugs, for auto immune disorders and cancers, are extremely expensive. We urge WHO to update its guidelines on biological drugs, especially those pertaining to introduction of biosimilar drugs that can be low cost substitutes of expensive biologics.