

## **WCC, PHM & DGH Statement to the Special Session of the Executive Board of WHO on Agenda Item 3: WHO Reform**

Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to address the Executive Board on Agenda Item 3 on behalf of Churches Action for Health, the People's Health Movement and the Democratising Global Health Coalition.

The issues raised in the Director General's paper are complex and important and we cannot in this brief statement address them all. We have prepared a more detailed commentary which we are keen to share with member states.

In the Programs and Priority Setting chapter we were concerned about the absence of any reference to the rise of transnational corporations which straddle nation-states and have a great deal of autonomy because of this. TNCs are a major feature of the global health environment and the challenge of regulating TNCs for public policy purposes, including health, is one that WHO must confront.

We note with concern the proposition that "WHO should focus on what it does best". The unstated corollary is that as new organisations arise who do some of the things WHO does, WHO should withdraw. WHO must maintain capacity across the breadth of its constitutional mandate. The proliferation of narrow, specialised, vertically-oriented partnerships has had significant hidden costs including health system fragmentation and donor incoordination; these can offset any benefits arising from their technical specialisation.

Turning to WHO's role in Global Health Governance we note that the paper limits the scope of global health governance to 'policy and priority setting for health'. This would exclude trade, global finance and the regulation of TNCs. Ignoring WHO's responsibilities in relation to these powerful determinants of health is a major weakness of this paper.

We commend the objective of organisation-wide resource mobilisation but we are not confident that the five strategies offered are sufficiently focused and have sufficient leverage. The anarchic funding practices of recent years are in part due to the structural autonomy of the clusters. Structural reform is a critical pre-requisite for more coherent fund raising.

Thank you