

Thank you Chair and distinguished members of the Executive Board. I am speaking on behalf of Medicus Mundi International, the People's Health Movement and the Third World Network.

We take this opportunity to express our concern on the continued effort in various international organizations to conflate quality of medicines with intellectual property protection and enforcement. It is important for WHO to clarify to various international organizations such as the World Intellectual Property Organisation, INTERPOL, and the World Customs Office, not to conflate IP issues with quality of medicine. Accordingly, we also believe that it is important for WHO to discontinue the use of the word "counterfeit".

We look forward to the establishment of the Open Ended Working Group to identify the "actions, activities and behaviors that result in SSFFC medical products". We hope the outcome of the open ended working group process will bring much clarity to the issue.

We urge that the work of the Member State Mechanism and the Open-ended Working Group be guided by concrete verifiable evidence. Similarly, the pilot project to establish a global surveillance and monitoring system for SSFFC, should be based on sound and concrete data and guided by the principle of transparency.

Further, we would stress that the mandate of the Member State Mechanism on SSFFC which includes the quality, safety and efficacy of medical products, as well as access to affordable medicines. Both quality and affordability complement each other. It is well known that higher prices are one major cause for the circulation of medicines with compromised quality. Therefore it is important for the MSM to discuss both issues as mandated by WHA resolution 65. 19.

Finally, we would like to stress that MSM is not, and should not be treated as a forum only for regulatory authorities. We believe that the participation of policy makers in the MSM is also important.

Thank you.