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Medicus Mundi International

Meeting:

Seventieth World Health Assembly (A70/1)

Agenda Item:

13.7 Promoting the health of refugees and migrants

Statement:

Medicus Mundi International would like to take this opportunity to address agenda item 13.7. Our statement is supported by the People's Health Movement.

We welcome WHO's shift in its approach on migration and health from a solely humanitarian-based approach to one based on health systems strengthening and the improvement of healthcare access to migrants. We firmly believe that the root cause of migration -- poverty and conflict - should be addressed at the UN organizations.

Migrants and refugees continually face barriers in accessing healthcare; with many countries introducing policies that act as barriers for migrants who seek secure access to quality healthcare.

We remind Member States of their duty to uphold the universal human rights of migrants for access to healthcare by 'instituting changes in law and policy to ensure that migrants and refugees are included in national and local health planning'.

We encourage the development of a situational analysis, a framework and a draft global plan of action as mentioned in the document. However, the urgency of the issue requires WHO to speed up the process and to revise the present timeline of submission.

We urge the Secretariat to include strategies which address the issue of human trafficking as a cause of forced migration, an area that is missing in this report. We urge the inclusion of policies that protect the rights of trafficked people and give them access to specialized services.

Finally, we urge member States to look at the drivers of migration and xenophobia as well as the institutional systems for managing the flow of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

Source URL (modified on 05/26/2017 - 05:54): <https://extranet.who.int/nonstateactorsstatements/content/medicus-mundi-international-9>