

**Statement to the 70th World Health Assembly
on agenda item 13.3 Addressing global shortage of, and access to, medicines and vaccines**

Thank you, Chair. MMI would like to take this opportunity to address agenda item 13.3. Our statement is supported by PHM.

Access to medicines issues affect all countries worldwide. Millions of people have died because they were not able to afford essential and lifesaving medicines. While LMICs continue to bear the major burden related to lack of access to medicines, patients in HICs are also starting to encounter major barriers to access. In addition, diagnostics, vaccines and medicines are missing for many diseases, which clearly shows that the current system of market-driven R&D fails to effectively address public health needs.

The UNHLP on Access to Medicines' report is a unique opportunity to revive discussions on IPRs and access to medicines within the WHO. However, we are concerned that the parking of a discussion on the UNHLP report in one document that discusses several other issues could dilute the debate on its meaningful recommendations and on obstacles posed by IPRs to access to medicines.

WHO is the primary global agency responsible for health worldwide and thus, it cannot divest itself of its responsibility in this regard. WHO's credibility is at stake if comprehensive discussions on the UNHLP report are not held at WHA 70. It is a matter of concern that the Organisation has failed to have a comprehensive debate on this report, and has not endorsed its recommendations in spite of strong support from CSOs and some MS.

We urge Member States to act on the recommendations made by the UNHLP. In particular, we call on MS to convene an inclusive open ended meeting that would discuss the opportunity to negotiate an R&D Convention.

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