

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

We welcome a draft resolution for combating neglected tropical diseases. We note that the World Health Organisation's roadmap recommends five fundamental public health interventions: preventive chemotherapy; intensified case-management; effective vector control; the provision of safe drinking-water, basic sanitation and hygiene; and involvement of veterinary public health'.

We invite member states to also note the World Health Organisation's second report on neglected tropical diseases released last week, which states that at least 780 million people do not have access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. Forty per cent of people without access to quality water sources live in sub-Saharan Africa, where many neglected tropical diseases are prevalent. Neglected tropical diseases are rooted in poverty, and we must also address the structural determinants of health to be effective.

We call upon member states to strengthen their commitment to these and other key determinants, so that they receive the same attention given to the other public health interventions previously mentioned.

We note that the main vehicle of implementation of activities on NTD is through partnerships, with a major role for pharmaceutical TNCs without any safeguards on managing conflict of interest. We would like to caution that enough safeguards be built into the NTD initiative to prevent TNCs from using it to extend their corporate interests.

Furthermore, the draft resolution does not provide a clear mechanism to boost much needed research and development for neglected tropical diseases. The report of the Consultative Expert Working Group on Research and Development recommended a global coordinating mechanism – linking priorities, financing, and access. We urge member states to integrate recommendations from the report of the CEWG in the draft resolution. The latest Lancet editorial shares these concerns "The 2013 World Health Assembly should be more ambitious and put back on the agenda the proposal for new global rules to secure sustained financing mechanisms for essential health r and d. the future elimination and eradication of neglected tropical diseases depends on it" (source: lancet editorial January 26<sup>th</sup> 2013

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Thank you.