

**Statement by Medicus Mundi International to the 64th session of the World Health Assembly on agenda item 13.12, Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, delivered by Ilker Kayi**

Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to address the Assembly on behalf of Medicus Mundi International and the People's Health Movement.

The NCDs initiative is too narrow in particular we believe it should include mental health.

It is disappointing that there is no reference to the work of the CSDH in the report. Unhealthy behaviors do play an important role in determining NCDs however there are structural determinants like education, income, gender and ethnicity which are underlying causes of NCDs and behavioral risk factors. Clearly there are important equity dimension of NCDs as emphasized by CSDH and these variations are closely linked to the social and environmental factors; not just individual behaviors. Therefore if the UN General Assembly is to provide an action-oriented outcome document preventive measures for social and environmental factors must be included.

While prevention is important we also urge member states to address the access to affordable treatment for NCDs. The resolution must clearly spell out the response of the member states and WHO to initiate law and policy measures to ensure access to affordable diagnostic tools and treatment, in particular the full use of the flexibilities of TRIPS.

However the usage of these products requires further attention to avoid over-servicing that will burden the health systems. Therefore rational use of medicines and diagnostic tools must be vigorously promoted.

It is also important to curb the practices of other industries which contribute to the prevalence of NCDs such as food and agricultural corporations. Therefore it is important the proposed resolution should incorporate a call to develop a code of conduct to regulate their advertisement and promotion of products.

The report is weak on the health systems implications of NCDs. Chronic disease management calls for on-going follow up and monitoring and clinical audit based on comprehensive PHC. There is a need to strengthen comprehensive PHC as the basis for managing chronic diseases.

The drive to give more prominence to NCDs includes some distinguished public interest civil society networks but also includes some very large transnational drug companies whose main interests are clearly marketing and profits. WHO needs to have a rigorous set of protocols in place to identify and protect against conflict of interest at the institutional level.

Thank you for your attention.