

Statement by Medicus Mundi International to the 138th session of the Executive Board on agenda item 7.5 Health and the environment: draft roadmap for an enhanced global response to the adverse health effects of air pollution

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the opportunity to address the distinguished members of the Executive Board on behalf of Medicus Mundi International and the People's Health Movement.

Air pollution threats reveal massive inequities among the world's population. The problem of air pollution is closely linked to social and economic determinants. However, the plan fails to recognise and address these aspects.

Further the critical issue of technology transfer has been reduced to indoor pollution. A comprehensive response to air pollution needs access to technologies beyond cooking stove technologies.

Ambient air pollution is closely associated with greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel powered industries, in particular, power generation and motorised transport. Technical innovation and the introduction of clean technologies require R&D and open channels for technology transfer. The continuing pressure for higher levels of IP protection and TRIPS+ conditions runs counter to this objective.

The efficacy of WHO data base on clean energy technologies needs to be independently assessed. The plan is silent about its interaction with the technology facilitation mechanism created under the Declaration on Finance for Development.

Finally, the plan is silent about the need for regulation of the private sector. Attempts to regulate the private sector might be threatened by current investment treaties. MS should be protected from the threat of corporate intimidation under investor state dispute settlement provisions in trade and investment agreements.

In short, the document misses an analysis of the current economic and trade-related rules that will prevent the establishment of a robust plan of action against the adverse health effects of air pollution. We urge member states to insist on a more strategic and focused approach to the social and economical determinants of air pollution that address these fundamental issues.

Thank you.

(288 words)

The statement will be delivered by Julie Steendam

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