



PHM Statement at the WHA78 – 17-29 May 2025

Agenda Item 13.8

Draft global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034

The WHO's draft Traditional Medicine Strategy (2025–2034) recognizes the value of traditional and Indigenous healing but falls short by privileging Western scientific paradigms over Indigenous epistemologies.

Centering “evidence-based” validation risks displacing practices rooted in land, culture, and spirituality. The draft fails to address how extractivism, land and ocean grabs, climate injustice, and corporate-driven IP regimes—particularly TRIPS—threaten Indigenous health sovereignty.

True integration must respect Indigenous autonomy, protect collective knowledge rights, and support intercultural, community-led research.

The strategy must explicitly prioritize frameworks such as the CBD, UNDRIP, and the Nagoya Protocol over trade rules when in conflict. A transformative approach demands decolonized health governance, publicly owned pharmaceutical production, and mutual learning between knowledge systems. Without these shifts, the strategy risks perpetuating the same colonial logics it seeks to reform.