

Statement to the 74th Session of the World Health Assembly, 24 May to 1 June 2021
on agenda item 13.8 Immunization Agenda 2030

Thank you, Chair. Medicus Mundi International would like to take this opportunity to address agenda item 13.8. This statement is supported by the People's Health Movement.

A robust global immunization strategy is a key tool for WHO to further increase access to vaccines and overcome structural barriers to access. Successful immunization plans call for a comprehensive strategy that includes health systems strengthening, research and development and scaling up local production.

We welcome the mention of innovation issues on the Immunization Agenda 2030, however it should further address the barriers posed by intellectual property rights, such as patents, and data exclusivity policies for vaccine access, and indicate how countries will be assisted to make full use of TRIPS flexibilities.

In addition, the ongoing pandemic has shown the importance of scaling up local production of vaccines, through innovation policies and manufacturing capacity building, which enable technology transfer. State owned production facilities are vital in ensuring access to vaccines in LMICs.

Agenda 2030 should promote greater transparency on the vaccine market, including R&D costs, procurement prices, and public financing of R&D. This is key to ensuring efficient technology transfer policies.

A comprehensive global plan should address health systems strengthening and health worker shortages. Immunization campaigns rely on comprehensive and strong public health systems, based on the principles of universal access and health for all. Health workers play a very important role in ensuring access and building trust across communities, particularly those adversely impacted by social determinants of health.

Vaccines are a key element to realise the right to health and universal and equitable access demands a comprehensive approach from countries, including both public health-led innovation policies and health systems strengthening.