

**Statement to the Special Session of WHO's Executive Board on Ebola  
on agenda item: 3.1 Current context and challenges; stopping the epidemic; and preparedness in  
non-affected countries and regions**

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

We welcome this special session as a moment for debate on the Ebola epidemic and ensuring WHO's capacity to respond to outbreaks. This epidemic could have been contained in an early stage. Member States have forgone their extraterritorial human rights responsibilities in the form of international assistance and cooperation as to reach a minimum essential level of primary health care and preventing epidemic diseases in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Moreover, these health services have been undermined by fiscal space limitations imposed by the International Financial Institutions in the past. Much of the recommendations in the draft resolution have already been proposed in the 2011 review of the implementation of the International Health Regulations. This includes the establishment of a more extensive global, public-health reserve workforce, as well as a contingency fund for public-health emergencies. It was known that huge core capacities deficits remain in many member states. What is at stake today is not only the response to Ebola. It is a unique momentum for WHO to re-establish its historic mission to be the coordinating international authority in eradicating epidemic disease and assisting governments in strengthening resilient health systems. In an interconnected world we can expect that a viral storm will come upon us the coming decades. This storm consists of a range of pathogens having pandemic potentials. In this Post-Westphalian scenario there is an urgent need to revise the International Health Regulations. Effectively, states should leave some of their sovereignty to the WHO and its global outbreak network as to act swiftly if required. This revision should also include obligations, such as on common but differentiated responsibilities for countries to finance the core competencies for outbreak response. The latter could be included in the negotiations on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you.

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