Statement by Medicus Mundi International to the 73rd World Health Assembly on agenda item 3, Address by WHO Director-General devoted to the COVID-19 pandemic response

Chair, Secretariat, Delegates

In these difficult times, we welcome the fact that a World Health Assembly takes place. We also welcome the intense negotiation process on the COVID-19 resolution as a strong sign that Member States still want WHO to direct and coordinate the global response to COVID-19 and other international health problems, with the World Health Assembly as its decision-making body.

Commemorating all who have died or suffered from the pandemic and its various consequences, including many healthcare workers,

We urge WHO members

• to deal, as caring states and societies, with the pandemic together with the people in your country and not against them; granting equal access to correct information, protective equipment and effective cure, allowing real social participation and safeguarding civil and social rights;

• to take the pandemic as another hard lesson: Building solid and equitable public health and social protection systems is what your people expect from you, and an effort to be undertaken with urgency;

• to understand that, in this interconnected world, you cannot resolve your health problems on your own. Health for All can only be achieved in global solidarity, addressing the burning social, political, economic and ecological determinants of health at all levels;

• to rally behind WHO who is leading the global public health response in a dedicated and credible way;

• to actively engage in multilateralism, negotiated solutions, binding regulations and science based public health, refrain from using health policy-making for any particular political gains, and make sure that all progress achieved in the fight of COVID-19 will be made available equally to all in need, in all countries.

This is a special WHA. While we criticize the reduction of civil society voices to written statements as exaggerated limitation, we recognize that our engagement in WHO governing bodies needs to be looked upon again in better times.

See you then!

Thank you.

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