

Statement to the Executive Board, 144th Session**Agenda Item 5.7.2****Medicines, vaccines and health products: Cancer medicines**

Stichting Health Action International (HAI) appreciates this opportunity to address the Executive Board regarding the report on cancer medicines, linked to the pursuit of Resolution WHA70.12. We commend the Secretariat for the development of this thorough and informative document.

As with other Non-Communicable Diseases, availability and affordability of cancer treatments are variable, depending on income and other economic factors. Economic and social inequalities should not determine mortality rates.

High prices of oncology treatments - a growing challenge for most WHO Member States - is often justified by prior R&D investments, which cannot be independently verified.

There will be no accountability without greater transparency. National authorities should guarantee that all information related to the R&D of a given product, including clinical trials and production costs, be accessed by a regulatory entity before granting market authorisation.

Intensive use of intellectual property (IP) protection measures, such as patents and other IP-incentives, allow for extended monopolies that—combined with a highly concentrated market in some cancer therapeutic areas—seriously hinder competition.

We will say it again: The use of TRIPS flexibilities and other IP management tools for public health goals, such as better access to medicines, are legitimate, appropriate, and available to all governments. It is the role and duty of WHO, as the global health guardian, to guide and assist Member States on how to make use of such instruments.

A new business model that encompasses a non-patent-centric R&D model and increases transparency of procurement, pricing and reimbursement decisions is absolutely necessary. A wide range of stakeholders, including academia, industry, regulatory authorities and civil society are already collaborating in projects based on delinkage where prices are dissociated from production costs. WHO can and should do more to support these initiatives.

We call on this EB to go beyond noting this report and to use it as a guide and tool when implementing other initiatives at the national and regional levels, including the Roadmap on Access to Medicines and Vaccines. Thank you.