

Statement to WHA72 on Access to Medicines and Vaccines

HAI made the following intervention on access to medicines and vaccines during the 72nd World Health Assembly in Geneva:

Thank you Chair,

Health Action International welcomes the revised Roadmap on Access to Medicines and Vaccines. We particularly note the extensive consultation process that has made it possible.

We offer our strongest possible support to the bold approach to access to medicines contained in the document under discussion, particularly in addressing critical issues, such as endorsement of intellectual property management tools that contribute to better access to medical technologies, innovation that meets public health needs, and enforceable standards of transparency at each stage of the access to medicines continuum.

We remain committed to the belief that WHO is the legitimate steward of democratic governance of biomedical knowledge by, for instance, by providing technical assistance to national authorities on the systemic use of TRIPS flexibilities, promoting full disclosure of clinical trial data and enabling access to the verifiable costs of R&D.

We commend the efforts of WHO and the South African Department of Health for the second Fair Pricing Forum. During the forum, consensus was reached about what a new, more accurate definition of a fair and affordable price might be, incorporating transparency as a fundamental component of global health good governance.

Transparency is not a goal in itself, but a means to an end, and can be a multiplier of government efforts to improve universal access to medicines in areas such as Health Technology Assessment, pricing decisions, procurement and reimbursement mechanisms.

Against the back-drop of ever-more unaffordable medicine prices, these cost-containment measures are not only effective, but proven and available. WHO must take its place at the forefront of the effort to reduce pervasive information asymmetries in pharmaceutical markets. Member States, in turn, must support this endeavour.