



Statement by Stichting Health Action International, Knowledge Ecology International and the Alianza LAC-Global on the occasion of the open-ended Member States meeting on the follow up of the report of the Consultative Expert Working Group (CEWG) on Research and Development Financing and Coordination, November 26-28th 2012

More than ten years of debate and discussion and the publication of three expert reports all have arrived at one conclusion: medical technologies, such as medicines, diagnostics and vaccines too often remain unaffordable, unavailable and unsuitable for the people who need them. This is not a problem for one country or region; it is the responsibility of all governments to ensure the health needs of their populations are met.

A complementary R&D framework is needed to address market and/or public policy failures; to stimulate R&D for diseases or areas of technology wherever market incentives have failed to deliver, and to ensure access to the resulting products. Several Member States seem to support the establishment of a WHO-hosted global health R&D observatory. Such an observatory would be a positive first step, but will not provide adequate coordination, increase sustainable financing or result in new medical tools that are needed.

If this is the only outcome to result from more than ten years of deliberations it would be woefully inadequate. Instead, critical and concrete steps are needed to follow up all key elements that should be part of an integrated solution as proposed by the CEWG. This includes mechanisms to monitor and coordinate R&D flows and set research priorities, mechanisms that secure sustainable financing and create new incentives for R&D, and managing research outputs in a way that ensures both innovation *and* access. These functions are interrelated and require a framework to support their integration, such as through a convention for essential health R&D.

With the health of so many at stake, Member States must agree on a process to address these fundamental problems and must do so in a manner that is consistent with the following key principles:

- 1 Priority health needs should drive R&D funding.
- 2 Global health R&D funding is a public responsibility and should be both sufficient and sustainable through public investments based on fair sharing of R&D costs.
- 3 Affordable and equitable access to the final product of publicly and philanthropically funded R&D should be the end goal of all R&D efforts. To ensure this, it is essential to de-link R&D costs from the price of products.
- 4 Public interest R&D should be carried out in a more transparent manner to avoid duplication and enhance efficiency, including transparency of R&D funding flows and R&D financing.



- 5 Incentives and norms governing publicly funded R&D should acknowledge R&D outputs as global public goods and expand knowledge-sharing and open management of intellectual property rights as a way to reduce the cost of R&D and ensure access to innovation.

We call urgently on Member States to work towards a transformative global framework for needs-driven health R&D.