



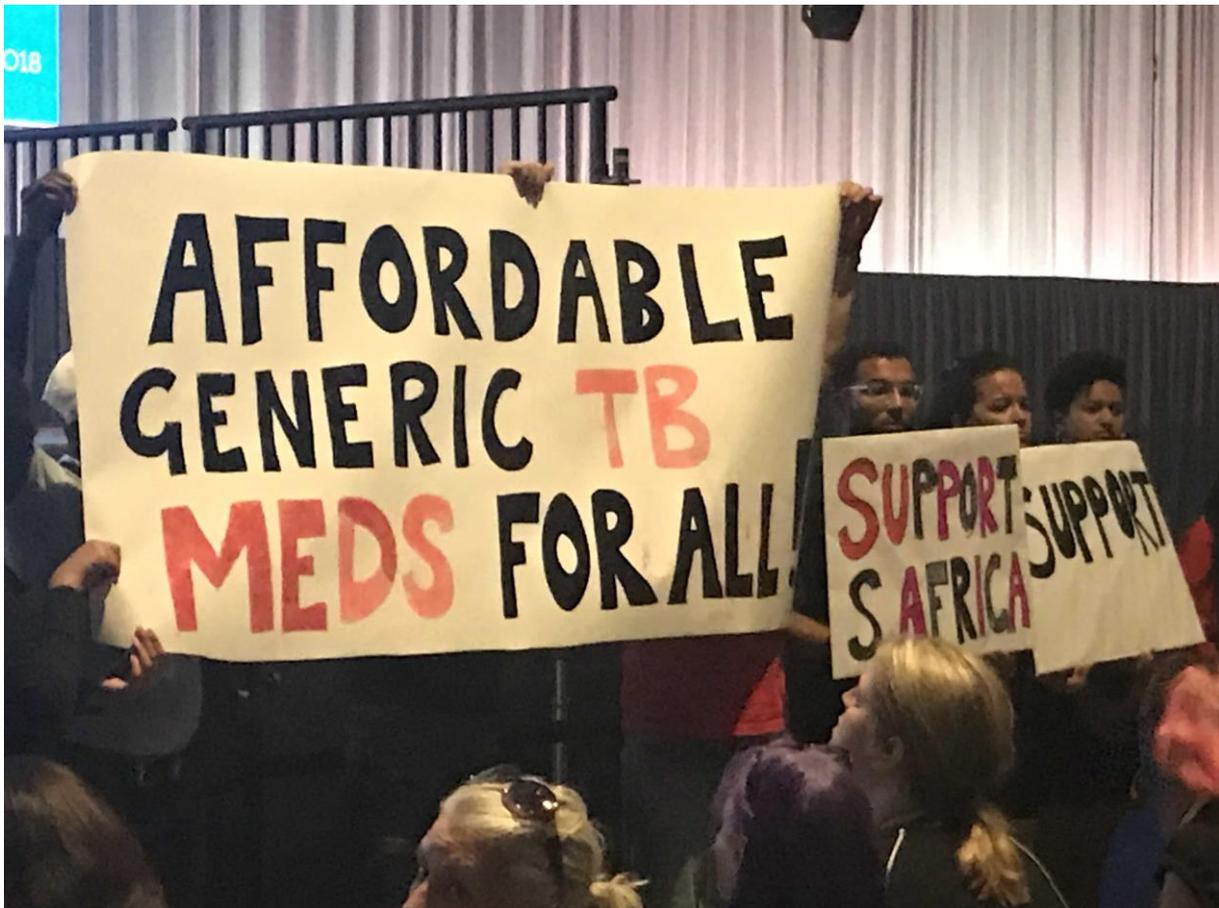
Action against AIDS Germany

Life is a human right
www.aids-kampagne.de

Berlin, July 27 2018

Press Release

Outcome document of the United Nations meeting on tuberculosis is at risk. Germany should not give in to pressure from the US government under Trump!



On 26 September, the United Nations High-Level Meeting on Tuberculosis will take place in New York. During this meeting, the gathered international community will determine the next steps to be taken to combat the global tuberculosis epidemic. And that is urgently needed:

Every year 1.7 million people die of tuberculosis, including approximately 400,000 people living with an HIV co-infection. The sustainable development goals of the Agenda 2030 will not be achieved if we fail to effectively overcome this epidemic. The high-level meeting is a unique opportunity to join forces in the global fight against tuberculosis and raise the required financial resources.

As it has now become known, important sections of the draft declaration negotiated so far by the UN member countries have been weakened at the insistence of the USA.

In the current draft version of the document references to the Doha Declaration of the World Trade Organisation, which reaffirm flexibility and the protection of public health, have been deleted. These so-called TRIPS flexibilities protect a country's right to take the necessary policies to ensure access to affordable medicines for its citizens. For example, they allow governments to grant compulsory licences to override patents in the interest of public health so that generic versions can be produced or imported and affected people receive the medicines they need.

As if that was not enough, the current draft includes worrying wording, which fatally purports that intellectual property rights are an important incentive for the development of new health products, an affirmation that appears to have been adopted 1:1 by the pharmaceutical industry.

South Africa and thus the entire G77 states do not want to accept these changes. Fortunately, negotiations on the final declaration are now being resumed.

We therefore call on the German government to continue to support South Africa and the G77 states and not to give in to pressure from the Trump government.

"Tuberculosis is a health emergency in many countries of the world. The use of the UN High-Level Meeting on Tuberculosis by the US government under Trump to weaken or even undermine the World Trade Organization's safeguard clauses for countries in emergency situations and to strengthen the interests of the pharmaceutical industry is a scandal that can hardly be surpassed in absurdity, says Sylvia Urban, spokeswoman of the Action against AIDS Germany.

"Of course, the changes made would benefit the pharmaceutical industry, but the omissions would have catastrophic consequences for access to affordable treatment options in countries of the global South. The German government must decide whether it really wants to give precedence to the interests of the industry over the human right to health", Urban adds.

"Similarly, it can only be described as fatal that the present document ignores the obligation of the economically better-off states to increase total official development assistance to at least 0.7 percent of gross national income," adds Joachim Rüppel, spokesman of the Action against AIDS Germany. The international community agreed on this target as early as 1970 in a specific UN resolution and has since then renewed it in all relevant decisions. Nevertheless, only a few countries have so far reached the necessary level of contributions. However, this is an indispensable prerequisite for achieving sustainable development goals such as ending TB, HIV and other devastating epidemics. A persistent deficit in overall development finance would inevitably lead to severe conflicts over the distribution of resources and to the underfunding of vital measures. We therefore strongly demand that the declaration include the commitment of all high-income countries to fulfil this financing commitment in the near future," says Rüppel.

Action against AIDS Germany calls on the federal government to continue to support the South African government and the G77 states and not to give in to pressure from the US government under President Trump.

People who need medication must also receive it. The UN High-Level Meeting on Tuberculosis is a crucial opportunity to reaffirm the rights of countries to take the necessary measures in order to make the access of their populations to essential medicines financially viable.

More sources:

Link Civil Society Position Paper: <http://www.aids-kampagne.de/aktuelles/2018-06-13-positionspapier>

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