

Federal Ministry of Health  
Herrn Jens Spahn  
Friedrichstraße 108,  
10117 Berlin

OPEN LETTER

**For affordable medicines worldwide. Give up the blockade – Support the WHA transparency resolution!**

Berlin, 23. May 2019

Dear Minister Spahn,

We are very shocked and extremely concerned about the positions taken by the German federal government in negotiations for a resolution on the transparency of research costs and prices of medicines at the current World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva.

The German government is vehemently blocking measures that can promote affordable access to medicines for people worldwide. High drug prices are no longer only in poorer countries a cause for why people do not receive urgently needed treatment. Even in rich European countries, healthcare systems are reaching their limits because they can no longer afford horrendous prices. At the same time, drug prices often have nothing to do with actual research costs, but are set according to how revenues can be maximised in the relevant markets. This was recently confirmed by a World Health Organisation report on cancer drugs. High demand, a lack of information and suppliers without competition make this possible. As consequence, sometimes poorer countries even pay higher prices than rich countries. There is an urgent need to take action.

You cannot negotiate a fair price blindly. Reliable information about the actual costs of developing a drug, how much the public sector has paid for its development and what the prices are for the same drug in other countries with similar income - this is the only way to negotiate prices at eye level.

The German Federal Government and especially your ministry have declared Global Health to be the hallmark of German international politics. We urgently appeal to you to uphold the principle of global solidarity. Make sure that the German government does everything it can to ensure that vaccines and medicines are affordable for all people worldwide. The negotiating position of the German delegation to the WHA urgently needs to be revised.