

Saturday, 1 February 2020, series of briefings and debates  
Civil society perspectives on selected global health topics

## **Session 2, 11.15 -13.15 hrs**

### **Access to Medicines and Vaccines**

#### **After the debates at the WHA: Perspectives of civil society advocacy**

Access to medicines has become a “routine topic” of the civil society meetings ahead of the meetings of the WHO governing bodies. Civil society engagement in this thematic field has benefited a lot of a well-established, strong team of likeminded civil society institutions who have over many years successfully promoted the access agenda. However, after some turmoil at the last year’s 72<sup>nd</sup> World Health Assembly caused by outspoken civil society activism around a proposed WHA resolution on Transparent Drug Pricing, the environment for civil society advocacy might have become more hostile. Anyhow, the powerful economic interests remain the same, and the struggle for access to medicine is far from being over.

#### Speakers and panellists

- Natalie Anne Rhodes, PHM / UAEM
- Thiru Balasubramaniam, KEI
- Pauline Londeix, Transparency Observatory
- Erika Dueñas Loayza, WHO Secretariat, Access to Medicines and Health Products

Moderator: Thomas Schwarz

#### **Restore access to internationally controlled medicines for palliative care!**

The struggle for adequate access to medicines includes internationally controlled essential medicines whose availability and affordability are conditioned by national and international “drug policy.” More than 65% of people in the world have low or no access to such essential medicines. This public health crisis affects primary health care in emergency medicine, trauma care, palliative care, chronic pain, dependence treatment etc. In May 2019, under US pressure, the WHO withdrew two key pain/palliative care guidelines member states used to improve access. Although the WHO Secretariat has committed to preparing replacement guidelines by the end of 2020, this normative and technical vacuum has a chilling effect on population health.

#### Speakers and panellists

- Natalia Arias, IAHP
- Gilles Forte, WHO Secretariat
- Francis Bwalya, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zambia

Moderator: Thomas Schwarz

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“We build a strong civil society space in Geneva  
for more democratic global health governance.”