To: 25 June 2024

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Re: MSF's restructuring of access work puts at risk the gains made by the Access Campaign and the access to medicines movement at large

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has been at the forefront of access to medicines work for decades: its initiatives, including the Access Campaign and the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi), have been critical in galvanizing public support and political will to expand innovation of and access to medical technologies. From its first campaign fighting to ensure access to antiretroviral therapy for patients at an MSF project in Thailand, to 2024's remarkable victory securing affordable access to bedaquiline for multi-drug resistant tuberculosis, the Access Campaign has driven countless successful campaigns in its 25 years. From work against harmful Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) that block generic competition, to highlighting the failings of the research and development models that maximize profits at the expense of public health, the Access Campaign has been a voice, a beacon, and a reference for many within and beyond the access to medicines movement.

The Access Campaign strengthens and joins MSF programmes, civil society groups, and patient networks to push for equitable access to affordable life-saving treatments and essential health technologies. The Access Campaign is a unique model that combines MSF's medical voice and local activism with evidence-based campaigning for policy change. While we commend MSF for what it has achieved, and the services it delivers at this very moment, we write today to express our serious concerns regarding the recent announcement on the fate of the Access Campaign.

The planned dismantling of the Access Campaign's core structure, capacities, expertise, and networks will reverberate across the access to medicines movement and beyond. It will be yet another setback to the already-shrinking patient activist and civil society space critical to holding pharmaceutical companies and governments accountable so that medicines are never a luxury.

This experiment will create a dramatically restructured and downsized team that will lack institutional continuity and fails to include the activism that goes hand-in-hand with technical work on access to medical products. The impact will be felt not only by MSF projects that rely on the Access Campaign for ensuring affordable access, but across resource-poor settings and by the populations it seeks to serve.

The closing down of the Access Campaign will have an extremely negative effect on the very populations with whom MSF stands in solidarity – the millions saved yesterday could see their lives cut short if we are not able to secure access to tomorrow's treatments.

MSF's foundational principle is that humanitarian actors should engage in témoignage - bearing witness and speaking out. No less important than speaking out is MSF's obligation to also listen when the communities it serves speak back. We encourage MSF management to listen and consider the wider access to medicines movement, particularly voices of the communities in the global south.

We write with one voice as patients, clinicians, MSF alumni, academics, non-profit R&D organizations, civil society groups, survivors, HIV networks and global health experts to say that while the MSF International Office has characterized the restructuring as merely shutting down a project, we believe it will cause catastrophic and irreparable damage to access to health technologies for communities served by MSF projects and beyond.

We urge you to reverse the decision to close down the Access Campaign and engage with our communities to ensure continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

[signatories as of 2:30 CEST, 26 June 2024, 120 organizations, 287 individuals]

Organizations

Access to Medicines Ireland Access to treatment Association, Russia African Alliance, Africa African Cervical Health Alliance (ACHA)

Aidsfonds, The Netherlands

All India Drug Action Network (AIDAN)

All-Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (CO "100 Percent Life")

Americas TB Coalition

Anankemag.com

Ärzte der Welt e.V./Médecins du Monde Germany

Asia Pacific Network of People Living with HIV (APN+)

Asociación Civil para la promoción de los Derechos Humanos, XUMEK

Association Européenne pour le Développement et la Santé

Association For Promotion Sustainable Development from India

Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network

AVAC

Belgian Lung and Tuberculosis Association

Brazilian Interdisciplinary AIDS Association (ABIA), Brazil

Brazilian Network for the Integration Of People's (REBRIP)

BUKO Pharma-Kampagne, Germany

Cancer Alliance, South Africa

Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUT), Brazil

Centro de Pensamiento Medicamentos, Información y Poder, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Colombia

Charitable Foundation "Second Life", Zaporozhye Ukraine

Coalition of women living with HIV and AIDS (COWLHA) Malawi

Consilium Scientific

DUMAIC Global Health

E-Drug Foundation

Eastern Europe and Central Asian Community Advisory Board (EECA CAB)

Equit Institute, Brazil

Eurasian Community for Access to Treatment (ECAT)

Eurasian Movement for the Right to Health in Prisons

FTA Watch, Thailand

Fundación Grupo Efecto Positivo, Argentina

Fundación IFARMA, Colombia

Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership (GARDP)

Global Fund Advocates Network

Global Health Advocates (GHA)

Global Humanitarian Progress Corporation GHP Corp. Colombia

Global Justice Now

Global TB Community Advisory Board (TB CAB)

Good Health Community Programmes Kenya

Grupo de Resistência Asa Branca-GRA B, Brazil

Harm Reduction International

Health Action International (HAI), Netherlands/Global

Health Global Access Project (HealthGAP)

Health Justice Initiative, South Africa

HIV Legal Network

HIV i-Base

Initiative for Health & Equity in Society (IHES)

Initiative for Health & Equity in Society, India

Initiative for Medicines, Access & Knowledge (I-MAK), USA

Innovarte ONG

Interactive R&D Bangladesh (IRD Bangladesh), Managing Director, IRD Bangladesh

International Rescue Committee

International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC) in EECA

International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC) in MENA

International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC), Global

Jan Swasthya Abhiyan, Mumbai

Just Treatment, UK

KILELE Health Association, Kenya

Knowledge Ecology International (KEI)

Matahari Global Solutions

MATRAM-Mozambique Treatme@nt Access Movement

Medicines Law & Policy

Medecins du Monde Germany

Nelson Mandela TB HIV information CBO

Observatorio de Justicia Sanitaria y Climática

Oxfam

Pan-African Treatment Access Movement

Partners in Health (PIH)

People PLUS, national network PLWH, Belarus

People's Health Movement Global

People's Health Movement South Africa

People's Medicines Alliance

Peoples Vaccine Alliance Africa

Pharm. Alliance Hoyep Tchanchou, Brussels, Belgium

Pharmaceutical Accountability Foundation

Positive People Armenian Network, Social NGO, Armenia

Prescrire. France

Public Citizen, US/Global

Public Eye, Switzerland

Public Foundation "Answer", Kazakhstan

Public Services International - Interamericas

PULS Comunitar, The Republic of Moldova

QUAMED (Global)

Red Argentina de Personas Positivas (Redar Positiva)

Red de Medicamentos de Guatemala

Red Latinoamericana por el Acceso a Medicamentos (RedLAM)

Resilient40 (R40)

Rethink Aadhaar Campaign

Rural Health Advocacy Project South Africa

Salud por Derecho, Spain

Salud y Fármacos, EE UU

Sama Women's Health, India

Saggg NGO BCD (patients with viral hepatitis), Ukraine

Santé Diabète

SECTION27, South Africa

Sidaction, France

South African NCDs+ Alliance (SANCDA+), South Africa

SPIN Plus Tajikistan

STOPAIDS

Stop TB Partnership, Community Delegation.

T1International

TB Accountability Consortium South Africa

TB Europe Coalition (TBEC)

TB People (Global)

Thai Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (TNP+), Thailand

The Delhi Network of Positive People (DNP+), India

The Insulin Initiative

Third World Network (TWN), Malaysia

Treatment Action Group (TAG)

Treatment Advocacy and Literacy Campaign TALC Zambia

Universities Allied for Essential Medicine (UAEM) Latinoamérica, Colombia

Universities Allied for Essential Medicine (UAEM), Brazil

Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM), Global

Wemos, The Netherlands

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Working Group on Intellectual Property (GTPI), Brazil

Yale Global Health Justice Partnership

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Loon Gangte, HIV Positive, India

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