

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
United Nations Secretary-General
United Nations Headquarters
New York, NY 10017

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Berlin, 29 July 2016

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

It was a great pleasure to see you again at the UN Global Compact Board meeting last month. I would like to congratulate you for the initiative you have taken to convene the High-Level Panel on Access to Medicines and for the work it has done so far.

Today, I would like to draw your attention to the pressing need to address issues of transparency and health ahead of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 71) in September.

Earlier this year, Transparency International (TI) together with several leading NGOs prepared a joint submission to the High Level Panel on Access to Medicines. Central to this was the call to increase the transparency of markets for drugs, vaccines, diagnostics and other medical technologies.

Through the work of 93 chapters and a further 23 partner organisations around the world, TI has demonstrated that measures that improve transparency can promote more effective research and development (R&D) and increased access to medicines, vaccines and diagnostics and related health technologies. Crucially, improved transparency enables policy makers, patients and public at large to have access to better evidence, and to reduce the information asymmetries that currently exist between manufacturers of products and everyone else.

Our research has demonstrated that key components of the business model of the pharmaceutical industry, including R&D and commercialisation, remain shrouded in secrecy, particularly as regards access to information by patients and the general public. This undermines trust in and accountability of the pharmaceutical industry. It leaves patients vulnerable to human rights violations, including the right to the highest attainable level of health and ultimately the fundamental right to life. It also undermines the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the overarching goal of leaving no one behind. Lack of transparency makes it more difficult for society to develop and implement the appropriate policies regarding the financing and priority setting of R&D and product purchases.

Due to the complexity, size and volume of transactions in the pharmaceutical sector, the lack of transparency creates an environment where the opportunities to exercise power and influence can have negative health outcomes and can result in corruption.

Given the far-reaching implications that lack of transparency and corruption have on overall health outcomes, we believe it is extremely important for the report "Access to Medicines" to be published as soon as it is finalised, because it will have a beneficial impact on health

outcomes globally when its recommendations are implemented.

Your public support to these health outcomes that are so critical to achieving Agenda 2030 would indeed be very powerful. It is also essential for Member States to tackle these issues head-on by promoting transparency as part of the different global health initiatives that are being considered. This is particularly important for the pricing and R&D costs of the new funding mechanisms that are being proposed for Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR) R&D.

With much appreciation for your consideration.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cobus de Swardt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cobus de Swardt
Managing Director