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Basel, Switzerland, 17 March 2014 - by e-mail only

**SUBJECT: Safeguards for Health Domains**

Dear Sirs

As a Network of organizations working in the fields of international health cooperation and global health policy and, among others, interacting regularly with national and international NGOs active in the domain of knowledge sharing, the Medicus Mundi International Network (MMI) regularly notices the need for health professionals of these countries, as well as their patients and general population, to access good quality and reliable health information.

Internet is increasingly becoming a major source of information for these people, if not the main one. This has also been recently underlined by a resolution adopted at the 66<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly in May 2013 on eHealth standardization and interoperability ([http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA66/A66\\_R24-en.pdf](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA66/A66_R24-en.pdf)). It is therefore of extreme importance to ensure the credibility of the source of online information.

Health is a human right that needs to be protected and promoted, including through the provision of safe, trust worthy and quality information in line with the best scientific standards. Health is not merchandise. Building appropriate safeguards for the health-related internet domain names is critical for ensuring that the health domains are operated and managed in the interest of public health.

We strongly believe that the safeguards proposed by ICANN in the context of allocating the new internet domain names are inadequate for health. The providers as well as the users of health data and services on the health domains need to be able to rely on a safe and transparent system, that ensure the credibility of the sources of health information and products and the privacy of health data. We hope, inter alia, that ICANN will take into account the governmental advisory group's recommendation that health-related domain names "may require further targeted safeguards".

Given these concerns and our conviction that public health interest must be protected as a matter of utmost priority, we call on the ICANN Board to delay the allocation of ".health" and other health-related names until adequate safeguards, and baseline conditions for their implementation, are in place. We urge the ICANN board to closely associate the health community and mainly the World Health Organization to the development of the desired safeguards for health and the associated management system required, and to rely on the expertise of that community for informing the ICANN Board's discussions at its upcoming meeting of June 2014.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Schwarz".

Medicus Mundi International Network  
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