

## **Provisional agenda item 9.4 – Mycetoma**

Speaker: Dr Nathalie Strub-Wourgaft

Thank you Mme Chairman, Honorable Delegates,

DNDi is a collaborative, patients' needs-driven, not-for-profit R&D organization. We discover and develop, new treatments for neglected diseases for which the traditional pharmaceutical business model does not work.

DNDi recently included Mycetoma in its portfolio to develop the only potential new treatment currently in the pipeline.

Mycetoma is a devastating chronic disease characterized by severe and stigmatizing deformities, disability, and morbidity. It affects the poorest populations in the most remote areas, affecting largely stigmatized children and young adults.

The disease is distributed worldwide but more typically in the 'mycetoma belt', which includes, amongst others, Brazil, Chad, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. Countries outside the belt are also reporting cases.

There are two causal agents, bacterial - prevalent in Middle and South America, and typically responding to antibiotic treatment - and fungal treated with antifungals with very limited success.

The current treatments must be taken for one year but are still poorly effective, have side-effects and are not affordable. As a consequence, sequential amputations are often needed as the disease does not cure and continues to spread.

Despite the resulting devastating deformities, its morbidity and negative socioeconomic impact the lack of international attention and awareness has led to a knowledge gap significantly affecting patient care and impeding prevention and control.

A major international effort is required focusing on unravelling the epidemiology, providing adequate treatment and designing preventive measures.

DNDi calls upon the Executive Board of the WHO to support the draft resolution proposed by Egypt, Nigeria and Sudan on mycetoma for its adoption at the 69<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly. This will represent a significant step forward recognizing Mycetoma as a major neglected health problem and as a neglected tropical disease under WHO NTDs programme.