

Provisional agenda: WHO reform - Involvement of non-State actors in WHO's governing bodies

Statement

Dear chair and EB members. Dear representatives of WHO Member States and the Secretariat

After a long week of EB deliberations,

Thanks for your dedication and honesty in dealing with pressing global health challenges.

Thanks for listening to those voices of civil society that could make it to Geneva and into the EB. We all know the shortcomings in the setup of the WHO governing body meetings: Limited instruments to manage a crowded agenda.

Too many prefabricated statements, too little dialogue

...and the same inequality in terms of power and access as anywhere. Reform is still needed. We can do better, all of us. However, In times of national egoism, unfettered power of the corporate sector and the UN system being undermined and bypassed:

- Please protect democratic multilateralism, and do not replace it with blurred multistakeholderism.
- Please protect civil society's constitutional right to formally participate in WHO governance, and do not replace participation with informal playgrounds for which there is neither a clear need nor demand.
- Please reflect on what needs to be done "upstream", beyond the governing body meetings, to protect and extend the space of civil society in national and global governance processes.
- And please do this politically and strategically, not through managerialism and piecemeal action.

Dear civil society colleagues, Let us not give up. There are good reasons for all of us being here. We are not just the "friends of the WHO".

We care for it. WHO is a people's organization. It is ours. And we are part of it.

But we also have to acknowledge that global health governance is a political arena and that the WHO is no exception to this. So let us reflect together, openly and constructively, how to contribute to making it better and stronger.

Thank you.

