

Meeting:

Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly (A68/1)

Agenda Item:

11.2 Framework of engagement with non-State actors

Statement:

Global Health Council and the Global Social Observatory appreciate the ongoing effort by the member-States of the World Health Organization to develop a contemporary framework for engagement with the many different non-State actors that are addressing global health issues. It is important for the WHO to interact constructively with these many different non-State actors. However we have two concerns with regard to this effort.

First, the proposed typology of non-State actors does not adequately take into account the diverse nature of the many non-State actors engaging in the global health arena. A preferred approach would be to recognize this diversity beyond the four categories currently proposed in the draft framework for engagement; and at the same time acknowledge that all non-State actors have interests that have the potential to contribute or detract from the mission of the WHO. Illustrative criteria for engagement should be developed that would not depend solely on whether an entity is operating on a for-profit or not-for-profit basis.

The second concern is that transparency and the disclosure of relevant interests should be expected from all actors, and this should be laid out as a basic policy to be implemented by the WHO Secretariat. It is important to define the criteria that will determine the types of interests that need to be disclosed, but it should not be necessary to establish an elaborate machinery for implementing the criteria. Nor should practices such as secondments or other forms of collaboration be prohibited outright. The WHO should be able to evaluate opportunities for collaboration based on transparency and disclosure of interests.

We applaud the WHO's efforts and look forward to a successful outcome that will strengthen the engagement between WHO and the non-State actors contributing to the global health agenda.