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La voz global para la defensa de los consumidores



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**Intervention on WHO Reform by Ina Verzivolti, for CI/IBFAN,**

**65th World Health Assembly 24th May 2012**

Thank you Chairperson for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Consumers International, the global federation of consumer organisations worldwide and a founding member of the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN).

Our remarks focus on two elements of document A65/5: 'Engagement with stakeholders' and 'Conflicts of Interest'.

1. We appreciate that the report no longer calls for **widening** of engagement with the so called 'stakeholders', as we believe that it is an **improvement** of WHO's relationship with public-interest NGOs that is needed. Such improvement may even require restricting engagement with actors related to commercial interests, known as business-interest NGOs, BINGOs.

BINGOs have been accepted in official relations with WHO, in violation with the 1987 *Principles* governing WHO's relations with NGOs, which only allow for NGOs that are "*free from concerns which are primarily of a commercial or profit-making nature.*" Some such groups are front organisations for industry and their relations with WHO should be guided by the framework on the interaction with the private sector, proposed in para 54.

2. The report proposed a review and update of the 1987 Principles. While we stand ready to engage fully in this process, we strongly believe that consultations on this matter should build on all key recommendations of the 2002 Review Report by the WHO Civil Society Initiative and on a thorough review of current practice regarding civil society.
3. We welcome the proposal of a review of partnerships hosted by WHO. However, this scope is narrow and leaves out all partnerships not hosted by WHO. Yet, these may carry the greatest potential for a reputational risk to the organization, as WHO exercises little or no control over them.

Member states may wish to call for a review of ALL partnerships against whether they enhance or limit the ability of WHO to fulfill its constitutional mandate.