

DEMOCRATIZING GLOBAL HEALTH COALITION
STATEMENT OF CONCERN ON THE INFORMAL CONSULTATION ON WHO'S
ENGAGEMENT WITH NON-STATE ACTORS

The Democratizing Global Health Coalition (DGH) has been actively engaged with the WHO reform since the beginning of this process. We have repeatedly expressed our concerns about the rationale and sense of direction of this reform. Yet, we have kept participating and contributing.

As public interest organizations, our main goal has always been to support WHO in fulfilling its constitutional mandate and functions of protecting and promoting the right to health, of acting as *the* directing and coordinating authority in international health, and of regulating powerful economic actors to prevent harm to people's health and lives. In contrast, for all the fascinating slogans of their public relations campaigns, private commercial entities have another primary goal, by constitutive nature and by fiduciary duty to their shareholders. This is to maximize profit.

Some of you may argue that we are stating the obvious. Evidently, it is not obvious at all. The semantic disguise of "non state actors" ignores this fundamental difference and blurs the lines between those that work for public health interest and those that do NOT. We strongly object to this approach.

The "Non-State Actors" route is problematic also because it goes against Member States' recommendations that emphasized the need for distinct policies on interaction with the NGOs, the private commercial sector and the philanthropic organizations respectively. These recommendations date back to the special session of the Executive Board of November 2011 and were confirmed by the 65th World Health Assembly decision in May 2012.

The proposal of a World Health Forum was rejected by member states two years ago. This October consultation – by lumping the business actors together with public interest actors in the same arena – ultimately re-proposes the same format of an open multi-stakeholder forum.

We are no doubt at a critical stage in dealing with the governance part of the WHO reform. Member States and civil society organizations should be aware of the dangers that the *Non-State Actors Approach* entails for health democracy.

We want to make it very clear to people in this room: we shall not allow our participation in today's consultation to be used to legitimize this process.

Signatories:

Health Innovation in Practice (HIP)
International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)

Medicus Mundi International (MMI)
NGO Forum for Health
Wemos
Medico International

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