

PHM MMI Statement on WHO Reform: WHO relations with Non-State Actors (NSAs)

Chair, thank you for the opportunity of reading this statement on behalf of MMI and the PHM.

EB133/16 acknowledges many of the challenges facing WHO in dealing with non-state actors (NSAs) and offers a useful analysis of some of these challenges.

However the proposed typology of interactions does not work. We urge instead a focus on risks. We see four kinds of risks that WHO needs to identify, assess and manage, in its relationships with NSAs:

1. compromised priority setting through the selective funding by donors of their favoured programs;
2. adoption of partisan policy perspectives through inappropriate influences on decision making;
3. legitimizing institutions and corporations whose purposes run counter to WHO's mandate;
4. programmatic ineffectiveness because of a reluctance to work in partnership with CSOs where such partnerships could contribute to health development.

The rules and tools for managing these different risks maybe different but the principles are common: intelligence, integrity and accountability.

Defining 'primary and secondary interests' is beside the point. There is always a swirl of different purposes in the motivation of NSA. What is critical is that WHO officials and delegates enter into relationships with NSAs with a realistic understanding of these swirling purposes.

Transparency is a pre-requisite for accountability but is irrelevant if there are no effective accountability mechanisms in place. Managerial accountability is important but not sufficient. There is also a need for whistle blowers, including CSOs, to bring public attention to potential failures in integrity.

Accreditation of NGOs to participate in governing body meetings should be based on a fixed term relationship, with periodic renewal, rather than being restricted to particular meetings. As a condition for granting accreditation WHO should require sufficient information to understand the range of purposes that the NGO might be seeking to advance through its accreditation status. Such information should be publicly available.

[EB133/16](#) asks the EB to endorse an approach based on a typology of interactions. We urge the EB to consider a typology of risks, rather than of interactions, and to focus more sharply on intelligence, integrity and accountability in their consideration of this issue.