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To non-State actors in official relations with  
WHO

In reply please  
refer to:

Your reference:

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Two groups of non-State actors recently approached WHO in a spontaneous manner, and shared their views on participation at WHO governing body meetings, as well as on other forms of engagement. I would like to sincerely thank them for reaching out to WHO and presenting useful proposals.

WHO highly values its collaboration with all non-State actors and in particular those in official relations. I would like to underscore that the “official relations” status is a privilege that the Executive Board (EB) may grant to nongovernmental organizations, international business associations and philanthropic foundations. This privilege includes inter alia the possibility to participate in meetings of WHO’s governing bodies or in meetings of the committees and conferences convened under its authority. To note, official relations with WHO is one of the many forms of collaboration with non-State actors engaging with WHO. Currently, there are 214 non-State actors in official relations.

The modalities of the conduct of governing body meetings are determined by the respective rules of procedure adopted by Member States that reflect the intergovernmental nature of WHO. The Secretariat facilitates **participation** of non-State actors in official relations within these rules, as smoothly and efficiently as possible. To ensure that a broad audience is able to follow the discussions and debates during the World Health Assembly (WHA) and EB meetings, the sessions are also webcasted and a limited number of public badges is made available, as appropriate, each day of WHA on a “first-come, first-serve basis” at the security desk of WHO. Regarding the modalities of the conduct of the drafting groups and meetings of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the EB (PBAC), these are only open to Member States, in line with the existing rules of procedures.

The **registration** process for governing body meetings has been streamlined and made electronic. Registration of non-State actors in official relations is similar to the registration process of Member States. In addition, practical information for delegates of non-State actors in official relations with WHO and a “Guide for delegates to the World Health Assembly” are sent to all non-State actors in official relations, so as to facilitate smooth registration and participation.

Non-State actors in official relations may request to **make a statement** on technical agenda items in the EB and committees A and B of WHA. The chair has the sole discretion to invite speakers to make a statement. For logistical and organizational purposes, non-State actors wishing to have their name placed on the list of speakers for the purpose of making a statement should notify the Secretariat at the latest by 08:00 am of the day of the meeting in question. In addition, non-State actors have the possibility to submit their statements in advance of the debate for online posting by the Secretariat on a dedicated website. This will enable them to make their views known before the debates. Non-State actors may wish to include in their statements to be published online, a footnote with a link to their website for further information. However, the summary records of WHA and EB that will be published after the meetings will only reflect those statements that were read out during the working sessions.

Availability of **seating and rooms** is largely determined by logistical constraints and the Secretariat is doing its utmost to facilitate all participants', including non-State actors' needs. During the WHA, Room A.817 on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor in the Palais des Nations is available to all non-State actors. Given that there is lack of rooms in WHO Premises in general for all the delegates to the EB meetings, especially during the ongoing construction work, it is logistically challenging to make a room available for the use of non-State actors in official relations only. Furthermore, non-State actors have dedicated seating areas in the Plenary, Committee A and B at WHA and in the EB room. Considering the increasing number of delegates that attend these meetings, it is difficult to guarantee enough seats for every participant.

WHO is working towards increasing the use of public WHO consultations and hearings. In this regard, efforts will be made to provide information that facilitates the participation of non-State actors in official relations in such consultations and hearings. Information of WHO governing body meetings and intergovernmental meetings are regularly published on the Governance website: <http://apps.who.int/gb/gov/index.html>.

Yours sincerely,



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External Relations