

Press Release
Defend the World Health Organization from corporate takeover

Geneva, 19 May 2015 – Ahead of the first meeting of the drafting group on Framework for Engagement with Non – State Actors (FENSA), Civil Society Organisations and Social Movements expressed their deep concern on attempts to facilitate corporate takeover of WHO. The joint statement signed by 33 organisations called on Member States to take such time as is necessary to achieve a robust framework for engagement with non-state actors, to protect the WHO from undue influence. Further, the statement also called on Member States to support the DG’s proposals to increase the assessed contributions.

FENSA which was initiated to safeguard the independence, integrity and credibility of WHO, now seem to bear the threat of facilitating and legitimising the corporate capture of the Organisation. There is a strong apprehension that the negotiations on FENSA may fundamentally alter the engagements with private sector and philanthropic foundations and NGOS sponsored by the private sector in a manner compromising the credibility of WHO. .

“Many proposals by rich countries in draft FENSA text is promoting corporate capture of WHO in the name of promotion of engagements without discussion on any comprehensive mechanism to avoid conflict of interest. These proposals if accepted would institutionalise the undue corporate influence on WHO”. Said Lida Lhotska , International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)

The signatories are concerned that rich member-state donors have been deliberately undermining the WHO and weakening its capacity to promote global health by underfunding, tight earmarking of donor funding and opening spaces for corporate influence

“We learned that many Member States are opposing any curb in the exiting practices, which facilitate the corporate intrusion in WHO. The opposition of certain Member States to ban the Secondment from private sectors and other non state actors as well as using the financial resources from private sector to pay the salary of WHO staff reinforces the status quo and threaten the credibility of the WHO.” said K M Gopakumar, Third world Network (TWN)

Over the last four years WHO has been through a far reaching reform program driven in part by arguments that the freeze on assessed (mandatory) contributions should remain in place until the Organization addresses its inefficiencies.

“The refusal of increase in the assessed contribution is the technique deployed to force WHO to open for corporate influence.” said Dr. David Legge, Peoples Health Movement (PHM). “The compromised flexibility in financial resources forces the vulnerability of WHO to look for resources from donors with profit motives and endanger the constitutional mandate of WHO.”

For more information, please contact

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