

First announcement

First day of the civil society meetings
ahead of the 72nd World Health Assembly
Geneva, 17-18 May 2019



FRIDAY, 17 MAY 2019 IN GENEVA
AT THE ECUMENICAL CENTRE (WCC BUILDING)

WHO, civil society and “non-State actors” How to deal with a difficult relationship

This full-day civil society workshop builds on a session on WHO governance at the civil society meeting in January and will focus on some particular WHO governance processes/issues:

- Reform of WHO Governing Bodies and perspectives of a further shrinking space for civil society
- Interaction of the new WHO leadership with various “civil society” teams and in various processes: Representation and legitimacy issues
- WHO engagement with non-State actors, FENSA evaluation
- Strategies of the new WHO leadership for engaging with non-State actors (“partners”) including philanthropic foundations and the private sector based on / beyond FENSA

The workshop is organized by the G2H2 working group on WHO and global health governance and financing. It shall allow deepening the analysis (what’s the problem) and moving towards strategizing and cooperating (what needs to be done, what we can do together). The workshop is closed, for civil society organizations only (G2H2 members or by invitation).



Registration is requested (deadline: Monday, 13 May 2019)

Programme updates and registration: <http://g2h2.org/posts/may2019/>

The civil society meetings ahead of the 72nd World Health Assembly build on a long history of civil society engagement in global health governance and policy. The meetings organized by the Geneva Global Health Hub aim at contributing to joint reflection and strategizing undertaken by civil society institutions considering themselves as “acting in the public interest”.

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

8.30-9.00	COFFEE AND NETWORKING
09.00	WELCOME
FIRST PLENARY	“WE ARE CIVIL SOCIETY (AREN’T WE?)”
9.15-10.30	<p><i>Towards a working definition of civil society and its position and role(s) in global health governance</i></p> <p>“Civil society” is a difficult and contested concept, with its roots in the political philosophy and social struggle of the 20th Century and with a challenging 21st Century reality that we need to better understand - and debate.</p> <p>In the field of global health policy, “civil society” has become a call for unity (“we are building a strong civil society space in Geneva for more democratic global health”), an instrument for inclusion and exclusion (“these are not proper civil society organizations”), a marketing label for lobbyists (“we represent civil society”), a romantic projection (“civil society gives a voice to the voiceless”), an instrument for window dressing, manipulation and co-option (“we have consulted civil society”), and much more.</p>
10.30-11.00	BREAK
SECOND PLENARY	“OF PARTNERSHIP(S), NON-STATE ACTORS AND MULTISTAKEHOLDERISM”
11.00-12.30	<p><i>Towards a shared assessment of what is wrong with the partnership paradigm and how to counter it, how can we strengthen our voice within the multistakeholderism, and how above this?</i></p> <p>15 years ago, WHO launched a “civil society initiative”, and there is still a considerable narrative on “engagement with civil society” at the WHO and other multilateral and global health institutions. But in times of the SDGs, the current mainstream narrative is all about partnership(s), multistakeholder processes and mutual accountability: “Yes, we can achieve the SDGs together, in partnership” or “UHC needs the engagement of all stakeholders”. WHO contributed to this confusion by packing all constituencies and interest groups together as “non-State actors”.</p> <p>There is some good critical analysis of the partnership paradigm and discourse and on the actors, powers and interest behind its promotion, in the political and economic context of the prevailing global governance regime. There is a need to critically assess how this mainstream narrative influences and distorts the position and role of civil society in global health governance. And there is a need to work together on a counter narrative, based on the right to health, and on different roles, interests and responsibilities.</p>
12.30-13.00	<p><i>Current critical issues, processes, cases: What’s the story? What’s the problem? Civil society positions, proposals, demands?</i></p> <p>Introduction into afternoon breakout sessions/ working groups</p>
13.00-14.00	<p>LUNCH</p> <p>Individually as brown bag or at the cafeteria</p>

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME (CONTINUED)

BREAKOUT SESSION	TWO WORKING GROUPS BASED ON FOUR CASE STORIES
14.00-16.30 Including a break	<p><i>Group I: Defining and defending the space and voice of civil society at the WHO and in global policy processes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case 1: Civil society and “non-State actor” participation in WHO processes and at WHO governing body meetings. The case of the reform of the WHO Governing Bodies. Case 2: Interaction of the new WHO leadership with various “civil society” teams such as the WHO-Civil Society Task Team (2018) and in various processes, and related representation and legitimacy issues <p><i>Group II: Critically watching and commenting on the multistakeholder paradigm and “non-state actors” policy/strategies at the WHO</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case 3: WHO Framework on Engagement with non-State Actors (FENSA) and its evaluation in 2019 Case 4: WHO’s “investment case” (2018) and “Partnership Forum” (2019): The unresolved financial crisis of the WHO and the resulting institutional conflict of interest <p>Leading questions for both working groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a shared assessment of the cases presented and discussed? (What’s the story? What’s the problem?) Are there agreed civil society positions, proposals, and demands? Is there a common ground for a civil society statement on this topic? What action is needed at the World Health Assembly? Who will continue to work on the issue?
FINAL PLENARY	FROM ANALYSIS AND DEBATE TO STRATEGIES, POSITIONS AND PROPOSALS WHAT CAN WE ACHIEVE TOGETHER, AS G2H2 (WORKING GROUP)?
16.30-17.30	Working groups report back to the plenary, based on the set of leading questions, followed by a debate in the plenary
17.30-18.00	Conclusions and feedback
18.00-19.30	RECEPTION Join us in the lobby of the Ecumenical Centre

FORMAT OF THE WORKSHOP

- Overall approach:** We want to provide an open and democratic space for joint reflection and brainstorming, learning and sharing among civil society activists engaged in global health (in a broad, interdisciplinary sense), counting on all participants as experts and committed to engage.
- Contact/enquiries:** [Mareike Haase](#) and [Thomas Schwarz](#)

VENUE (FRIDAY WORKSHOP ONLY)

Ecumenical Centre, Route de Ferney 150, Grand-Saconnex, Geneva

The Friday session of the civil society meeting is kindly hosted by the World Council of Churches

How to get there: From the Cornavin railway station or the Airport, take bus No. 5 (direction Airport) or bus No. 28 (direction Vernier). From the Airport, take bus No. 5 (direction Thônex). Leave the bus at Crêts de Morillon (stop on demand). The entrance is at Route des Morillons 1.



CIVIL SOCIETY MEETINGS IN GENEVA, 17-18 MAY 2019

- **Online programme, updates, registration**
<http://g2h2.org/posts/may2019/>
- **Events on Saturday, 18 May 2019 at the Maison des Associations**
 - 09.00-10.30 hrs G2H2 Annual General Meeting
For members of the Geneva Global Health Hub
 - 10.45-17.30 hrs Civil society perspectives on selected global health topics:
From analysing and sharing to strategizing and cooperating
Public briefings and debates followed by civil society strategy meeting
- **Registration is requested for all sessions**
Deadline: Monday, 13 May 2019
Register here: <http://g2h2.org/posts/may2019/>, bottom of the page
Non-members are requested to pay a small registration fee.
A list of registered participants can be ordered at the G2H2 Secretariat.

GENEVA GLOBAL HEALTH HUB G2H2

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The Geneva Global Health Hub (G2H2) set up in 2016 intends to contribute to longer-term strategic thinking and coherent and sustained action by civil society entities involved in global health advocacy. G2H2 will have its second Annual General Meeting on Saturday morning, 18 May.

“We build a strong civil society space in Geneva for more democratic global health governance.”