

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).

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 that we need to better understand - and debate. 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</p>

	<p>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 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>
13.00-14.00	LUNCH BREAK
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	<p>FROM ANALYSIS AND DEBATE TO STRATEGIES, POSITIONS AND PROPOSALS WHAT CAN WE ACHIEVE TOGETHER, AS G2H2 (WORKING GROUP)?</p>
16.30-18.00	Working groups report back to the plenary, based on the set of leading questions, followed by a debate in the plenary, conclusions and feedback
18.00-19.30	RECEPTION