

Engagement with non-State actors

Report by the Director-General

INTRODUCTION

1. In May 2016, the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA69.10 on the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors, in which the Director-General was requested, *inter alia*, to fully operationalize implementation of the Framework within a two-year time frame and to report annually thereon to the Executive Board. This document contains the second annual report.¹ Information on proposals for admitting non-State actors into official relations, and on reviews of the status of existing official relations, are set out in document EB142/29. The requirements of the Framework in respect of official relations processes have now been fully implemented.

2. Implementation of the Framework is progressing. In view of the important benefit that non-State actors can bring to global public health and to the Organization in the successful fulfilment of its role in global health, the Framework will be implemented in an enabling manner that further promotes strategic engagement, while protecting and preserving WHO's integrity, reputation and public health mandate.

ENGAGEMENT WITH NON-STATE ACTORS

3. WHO continues to engage actively with a broad range of non-State actors. Once the Framework is fully operationalized, it will be possible to compile a comprehensive overview of ongoing engagements at all three levels of the Organization. The register of non-State actors currently contains the profiles and engagement plans of about 200 non-State actors in official relations. Due diligence and risk assessments for specific engagements are conducted continuously. Engagements in the context of emergencies are given priority for due diligence over engagements in other settings in order to facilitate immediate implementation in the field. Care is taken to ensure that implementation of the Framework does not disrupt ongoing engagements.

4. The Framework provides a firm basis for enhancing engagement, and also serves as an instrument for identifying the risks and balancing them against the expected benefits, while protecting and preserving WHO's integrity, reputation and public health mandate.² One unforeseen consequence of the accountability process provided for under the Framework is that it is sometimes viewed as an

¹ See document EB140/41 for the first annual report.

² See paragraph 4 of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors.

additional requirement, which has the effect of reinforcing an already deeply rooted aversion to risk within the Organization. In order to fulfil its mandate in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals, WHO will need to take a more proactive approach to engagement, while fully implementing the Framework. The Organization is working to increase the awareness of staff about the importance and benefits of enhanced engagement with non-State actors in order to advance global health and the work of the Organization, while managing the associated risks through the processes established within the Framework.

5. Recent examples of engagement by non-State Actors in the work of WHO include the following. At the Seventieth World Health Assembly, 104 non-State actors in official relations, with a total of 1241 delegates, made 191 statements on 31 items. WHO is exploring strategic partnerships with several philanthropic foundations, including the Wellcome Trust and Bloomberg Philanthropies, in order to promote action on shared priorities, such as epidemic preparedness, antimicrobial resistance, research and noncommunicable diseases. The Director-General met civil society leaders at an event organized by the United Nations Foundation and the RESULTS movement in the margins of the seventy-second session of the United Nations General Assembly, held in New York in September 2017, on strengthening collaboration between WHO and civil society.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK

6. In line with resolution WHA69.10, implementation will continue until the deadline of May 2018. A number of milestones have already been achieved. Implementation started immediately after the Framework was adopted in May 2016, and engagement proposals are being assessed in accordance with its provisions. The register of non-State actors has been established and is being rolled out beginning with non-State actors in official relations. A number of administrative actions related to implementation of the Framework have been undertaken, including: updating the website on engagement with non-State actors;¹ revising the relevant sections of the e-manual and all other internal policies; delivering briefings to WHO departments, regions, joint programmes and technical groups; ensuring that the process of applying for and confirming official relations is consistent with policy requirements; and launching a change management project for engagement. The criteria and principles for secondments from nongovernmental organizations, philanthropic foundations and academic institutions set out in the document submitted to the Seventieth World Health Assembly are being applied.² In July 2017 there were four secondments from different non-State actors – two from academic institutions³ and two from philanthropic foundations⁴ – among whom three were seconded to headquarters and one to a country office.

7. Work on the following steps towards implementation is under way and will be completed by May 2018. The guide for staff implementing the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors has been developed following a broad consultation process. It was field tested with all staff between

¹ See <http://who.int/about/collaborations/non-state-actors/en/> (accessed 24 October 2017).

² Document A70/53.

³ One secondee comes from the University of Kanazawa and is working in the HIV department to provide technical support to the Global Hepatitis Programme; the other, from the King's Sierra Leone Partnership, is working in the Sierra Leone country office to strengthen scientific and technical cooperation in the field of hospital management.

⁴ One secondee comes from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and is supporting projects to strengthen the transparency and accountability of the Polio programme; the other, a senior strategist at the United Nations Foundation, is working to strengthen the donor outreach and advocacy activities the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.

June and August 2017 and subsequently revised. A second edition of the guide will be published by the end of 2017.¹ In order to provide a proper balance in promoting both engagement and accountability, the introductory section of the guide will highlight the strategic importance of engagement. Following consultations with non-State actors in May 2017, the handbook for non-State actors is being finalized and will be published before the end of 2017. The global engagement management tool provides the platform for the register of non-State actors and will also provide the electronic workflow for the process established in the Framework. The development process has proved more complex than originally anticipated as it is also designed to facilitate the coordination of resource mobilization throughout the Organization and the management of the declarations of interest of individual experts. A change management plan and training materials for staff are being developed. The electronic workflow and clearance process will be progressively rolled out in early 2018.

8. All regions are actively collaborating on implementation of the Framework through the network of focal points. Two regional committees have placed engagement with non-State actors and implementation of the Framework on their agendas while others have included it in their overall reports. The Regional Office for the Americas/PAHO reports on implementation of the Framework to its Executive Committee;² the Regional Committee for Europe has considered a report on partnerships for health in the European Region,³ and, through resolution EUR/RC67/R7 (2017)⁴ and in accordance with paragraph 57 of the Framework, has established a procedure for granting accreditation to international, regional and national non-State actors not in official relations with WHO that allows them to participate in meetings of the Regional Committee. The Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean has established an internal selection committee, which also reviews and takes management decisions on proposed grants made to non-State actors as implementing partners based on the results of the assessments (technical, due diligence) performed.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

9. The Board is invited to note the report.

= = =

¹ See <http://who.int/about/collaborations/non-state-actors/en/> (link will be added by December 2017).

² See document CE160/6
http://www.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=40199&Itemid=270&lang=en.

³ Document EUR/RC67/17 Rev.1
http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/346969/67wd17e_Rev.1_Partnerships_170712.pdf?ua=1.

⁴ http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/349225/67rs07e_Partnerships_170893.pdf?ua=1.