



REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Provisional Agenda item 7.4

*Sixty-eighth Session
Dili, Timor-Leste
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SEA/RC68/9 Rev.1

2 September 2015

WHO reform:

Framework of engagement with non-State actors

As part of WHO reform, the governing bodies requested the Director-General to develop an overarching framework as well as separate policies on WHO's engagement with different groups of non-State actors.

The Secretariat submitted a draft framework for engagement with non-State actors to the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly, which decided that it be discussed by regional committees and the revised draft submitted to the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly through the Executive Board.

On the basis of inputs received from debates at the meetings of governing bodies and consultations, the Secretariat submitted a revised version of the draft overarching framework as well as separate policies on WHO's engagement with different groups of non-State actors to the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly in May 2015.

The Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly, while welcoming the progress made towards consensus on the framework of engagement with non-State actors, noted that it wished to finalize the framework at the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly in 2016. It requested the Director-General to (i) convene an intergovernmental meeting as soon as possible; (ii) submit the finalized framework of engagement with non-State actors for adoption to the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly through the Executive Board; and (iii) develop the register of non-State actors in time for the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly.

The High-Level Preparatory (HLP) Meeting held in the WHO Regional Office in New Delhi from 29 June to 2 July 2015 reviewed the attached working paper and made the following recommendations.

Actions by Member States

- (1) Participate in the open-ended intergovernmental meeting scheduled to be held in Geneva during 8–10 July 2015.
- (2) Participate in and share inputs on the draft framework during the intersessional meeting to be organized by the Regional Office on 24–25 August 2015 in Sri Lanka.

Action by WHO

- (1) Convene an intersessional meeting of all Member States before the Sixty-eighth Session of the Regional Committee (24–25 August 2015) to build a regional position on the sections of the draft framework where consensus is yet to be reached.

Accordingly, an intersessional meeting with Member States to discuss the draft framework of engagement with non-State actors was organized in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 24 to 25 August 2015, in which Member States arrived at a regional position on many of the sections of the draft framework where consensus is yet to be reached.

This revised working paper, the HLP meeting report (SEA-PDM-30), the intersessional meeting report (SEA/PIR/1), and the draft framework of engagement with non-State actors with the proposed Regional position incorporated as comments (SEA/RC68/9 Add.1) are submitted to the Sixty-eighth Session of the Regional Committee for its consideration.

Introduction

1. As part of WHO reform, the governing bodies requested the Director-General to develop an overarching framework as well as separate policies on WHO's engagement with different groups of non-State actors.
2. The Secretariat submitted a draft framework for engagement with non-State actors to the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly, which decided that the regional committees should discuss the draft framework and submit a report on their deliberations to the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly through the Executive Board.
3. The WHO regional committees discussed the draft framework (along with the comments made by Member States) and submitted the report on their deliberations to the Secretariat for necessary improvements in the draft framework.
4. The Executive Board, at its 136th Session in January 2015, reviewed the revised draft framework and noted that further improvements were needed. It decided to invite Member States to submit specific proposals for amendments and requested the Director-General to convene an Open-Ended Intergovernmental Meeting (OEIGM). At its meeting during 30 March–1 April 2015, OEIGM reviewed the draft framework and achieved progress.
5. On the basis of the inputs received from debates at the meetings of governing bodies and consultations, the Secretariat submitted a revised version of the draft overarching framework as well as separate policies on WHO's engagement with different groups of non-State actors to the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly in May 2015.

Situation analysis

6. The Health Assembly welcomed the progress made towards consensus on the framework of engagement with non-State actors. Agreements were made on several sections of the framework such as the following fundamental elements.

Rationale: "WHO's engagement with non-State actors supports implementation of the Organization's policies and recommendations as decided by the governing bodies, as well as the application of WHO's technical norms and standards."

Principles: WHO's engagement with non-State actors is guided by the following overarching principles. Any engagement must:

- demonstrate a clear benefit to public health; conform to the WHO Constitution, mandate and general programme of work;
- respect the intergovernmental nature of WHO and the decision-making authority of Member States as set out in the WHO Constitution;
- support and enhance, without compromising, the scientific and evidence-based approach that underpins WHO's work;
- protect WHO from any undue influence, in particular, on the processes in setting and applying policies, norms and standards;
- not compromise WHO's integrity, independence, credibility and reputation;

- be effectively managed, including by, where possible, avoiding conflict of interest and other forms of risks to WHO; and
- be conducted on the basis of transparency, openness, inclusiveness, accountability, integrity and mutual respect.

Challenges

7. Future deliberations are expected to revolve around the following sections of the overarching framework where consensus is yet to be reached:

- management of conflict of interest and other risks of engagement
- secondment
- relation of the framework to other WHO policies
- official relations
- accreditation of NGOs
- oversight of engagements
- non-compliance with the framework
- monitoring and evaluation of the framework.

Policy implications

8. This framework would replace the following policies:

- principles governing relations between the World Health Organization and nongovernmental organizations; and
- guidelines on interaction with commercial enterprises to achieve health outcomes.

9. The implementation of the framework will have financial and organizational implications at all three levels of the Organization as reported to the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly.

10. To promote transparency and accuracy in WHO's engagement with non-State actors, the Secretariat is developing an Internet-based, publicly available electronic tool called register of non-State actors that will be used by the Secretariat to document and coordinate engagement with non-State actors.

Next steps

11. The Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly adopted a resolution requesting the Director-General to:

- convene as soon as possible, and no later than October 2015, an open-ended intergovernmental meeting to finalize the draft framework of engagement with non-State actors on the basis of progress made during the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly;

- submit the finalized draft framework of engagement with non-State actors for endorsement to the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly, through the Executive Board at its 138th Session; and
- develop the register of non-State actors in time for the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly, taking into account progress made on the draft framework of engagement with non-State actors.