



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

EXECUTIVE BOARD
114th Session
Agenda item 6.4

EB114/19
26 May 2004

Nongovernmental organizations: reconsideration of two applications for admission into official relations with WHO

Report of the Standing Committee on Nongovernmental Organizations

1. At its 113th session the Board considered the recommendation of its Standing Committee on Nongovernmental Organizations to admit the International Council of Grocery Manufacturers Associations, and the Confederation of the Food and Drink Industries of the EU, into official relations with WHO. Its discussion focused mainly on two questions: were the organizations not-for-profit in nature and did they have links with the tobacco industry? The Board deferred taking a decision on the recommendation and requested obtention of additional information from the two organizations on these two questions for consideration by the Standing Committee and the Board at its 114th session.¹
2. The Standing Committee² met on 24 May 2004 to consider the additional information provided by the two nongovernmental organizations.³
3. The Committee debated whether the organizations could be considered to be not-for-profit in nature. It concluded that, from the information available, both were clearly not for profit, even though members of the national associations of these international nongovernmental organizations were commercial entities that manufactured food and drink products.
4. The Committee was informed about a link between these organizations and the tobacco industry. A holding company, owning both a processed-food manufacturer and a tobacco firm, was a member of one of the national associations of the International Council of Grocery Manufacturers Associations. The same food manufacturer, though not the holding company, was a member of an organization that was a member of the Confederation of the Food and Drink Industries of the EU. WHO was aware of the link, but that had not prevented the Secretariat from maintaining contact, when required and wherever appropriate, with the food manufacturer concerned.

¹ Document EB113/2004/REC/2, summary record of the tenth meeting, section 5.

² Members of the Standing Committee on Nongovernmental Organizations: Dr F. Huerta Montalvo, Chairman (Ecuador), Dr A.A. Yoosuf (Maldives), Dr F. Lamata Cotanda (Spain), Dr A.B. Osman (Sudan), Mrs Le Thi Thu Ha (Viet Nam).

³ Document EB114/12.

5. The Committee was concerned to learn of the link with an industry whose products were dangerous to the health of people. It was of the view that, should those organizations be admitted into official relations with WHO, they should be reminded of WHO's tobacco-control policies and monitored to ensure that these policies were not violated.

6. The Committee also noted that resolution WHA57.17 and the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health call for cooperation with the food industry. The Committee was concerned, however, to make sure that should the two organizations be admitted into official relations, such relations could not be used to promote their work to the detriment of WHO's. The Committee was advised that the Secretariat vigorously pursued any organization that was considered to be misusing its links, whether formal or informal, with WHO.

7. In response to a request for clarification as to the mechanisms available to the Executive Board to review or monitor collaboration with nongovernmental organizations in official relations with WHO, the Committee was informed that the period of official relations was three years, after which the organizations were invited to submit a report on their activities with WHO. On the basis of such a report the Board decided whether to maintain the organizations in official relations. However, should there be cause for concern before the three-year review date, the Board would be so advised.

8. Two members expressed the view that links with the tobacco industry should counsel caution, and that it might be preferable to continue maintaining informal working relations. On balance, the Committee felt that the three-year review and monitoring of activity were considered adequate safeguards to protect WHO's policies and principles. It therefore decided to recommend that the two organizations should be admitted into official relations with WHO in order to provide the Organization with the broadest possible opportunity to work with all concerned stakeholders in meeting its policy objectives.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

9. The Executive Board is invited to consider the following draft resolution:

The Executive Board,

Having examined the report of its Standing Committee on Nongovernmental Organizations:¹

DECIDES to admit into official relations with WHO the International Council of Grocery Manufacturers Associations and the Confederation of the Food and Drink Industries of the EU.

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¹ Document EB114/19.