
Engagement with non-State actors

Non-State actors in official relations with WHO

Report by the Director-General

1. “Official relations” is a privilege that the Executive Board may grant to nongovernmental organizations, international business associations and philanthropic foundations that have had and continue to have a sustained and systematic engagement in the interest of the Organization. The aims and activities of all these entities shall be in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Constitution of the World Health Organization, and they shall contribute significantly to the advancement of public health.¹
2. In accordance with the provisions of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors,² entities in official relations with WHO are international in membership and scope, have a constitution or similar basic document, an established headquarters, a governing body, an administrative structure and a regularly updated entry in the WHO Register of non-State actors, through which such entities provide all the necessary information on their nature and activities.
3. Official relations are based on a plan for collaboration between WHO and the non-State actor, which contains agreed objectives and outlines activities for the coming three-year period, and which is structured in accordance with the general programme of work and programme budget and is consistent with the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors. These plans shall be free from concerns that are primarily of a commercial or profit-making nature.
4. In line with the provisions of the Framework, the Secretariat presented for the consideration of the Executive Board at its 154th session, through the thirty-ninth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board in January 2024, applications from non-State actors for admission into official relations and those non-State actors set to undergo their triennial review.³ While Member States emphasized their trust in the Secretariat and had no issues with either the application of the eligibility criteria for admission into official relations with WHO and the due diligence and related processes for official relations set out in the Framework, they requested the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, through decision EB154(12) (2024), to conduct further discussions regarding the proposal to admit the two entities listed in Annex 1 to document EB154/37 and the present document, including at its informal meeting, and to provide a recommendation to the Executive Board at its 155th session, through the fortieth meeting of the Programme, Budget and

¹ The provisions are set out in paragraphs 50–66 of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors.

² Adopted by the Health Assembly in resolution WHA69.10 (2016).

³ See documents EB154/37 and EB154/4; see also the summary records of the Executive Board at its 154th session, twelfth and thirteenth meetings.

Administration Committee in May 2024, to enable the Board to finalize its decision. In order to assist the Committee in its work, a draft decision is set out in a separate document.¹

5. In accordance with the provisions of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors, the Executive Board shall be responsible for deciding on the admission of organizations into official relations with WHO.²

6. In order to support the Executive Board in fulfilling its mandate for official relations, the Secretariat assessed applications from non-State actors for admission into official relations and, as a result of the review, presented for the consideration of the Board applications from the following two entities: Rare Diseases International and The Center for Reproductive Rights, Inc.

7. The two entities concerned have completed their entries in the WHO Register of non-State actors. Summary information on both entities, describing their engagement with WHO over the past three years and the collaboration planned for the next three years, is contained in the Annex to the present document. The collaboration plans are available in the WHO Register of non-State actors.³

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

8. The Board is invited to note the report and to consider the draft decision contained in document EB155/7 Add.1, together with any recommendation provided by its Programme, Budget and Administration Committee.⁴

¹ See document EB155/7 Add.1.

² Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors, paragraph 54.

³ For more information, see the WHO Register of non-State actors (https://publicspace.who.int/sites/GEM/official_relations_details.aspx?id=2580, accessed 11 April 2024, and https://publicspace.who.int/sites/GEM/official_relations_details.aspx?id=2554, accessed 11 April 2024).

⁴ See document EB155/2.

ANNEX

**PROPOSED APPLICATIONS OF NON-STATE ACTORS FOR
ADMISSION INTO OFFICIAL RELATIONS WITH WHO****Rare Diseases International**

1. Rare Diseases International is a nongovernmental organization legally registered in France in 2018. The entity advocates for persons living with a rare disease and the recognition of rare diseases as a global policy priority. The mission of Rare Diseases International is to provide a strong common voice for people living with a rare disease and their families around the world.
2. The entity is a member-based organization with over 88 member organizations in over 150 countries, governed by a Council of Directors with experience in rare diseases. Its sources of funding are composed of grants and donations from nongovernmental organizations, private sector entities, philanthropic foundations, and membership fees.

Activities carried out with WHO during the period 2021–2023

3. Rare Diseases International has provided technical input and support to WHO's work on rare diseases; it also advocates for equitable access to health services for persons living with a rare disease. In addition, the entity provided comprehensive research to support WHO's activities in improving health services for persons living with a rare disease.
4. The entity engaged with WHO on health systems strengthening by increasing awareness on rare diseases and their visibility, identifying needs of the global rare disease community, and mapping available technical resources in rare diseases. The entity also gathered and provided technical input for WHO's consideration to advance its work on the WHO International Classification of Diseases, Essential Medicines List, and Essential Diagnostics List, as well as for improving recognition and codification of rare disease in health systems and access to medicines for rare diseases.

Planned collaborative activities with WHO for the period 2024–2026

5. The three-year plan for collaboration supports WHO's work towards fulfilling the goals and objectives set in the first strategic priority, One billion more people benefiting from universal health coverage, specifically for people living with a rare disease. Planned collaborative activities include the provision of technical input, capacity building, and dissemination of WHO recommendations and public health messages, in addition to advocacy for strengthening knowledge globally on rare diseases.
6. The entity will also support WHO in its work: to strengthen evidence, knowledge and technical content in order to increase access to essential medicines and diagnostics for people living with rare diseases; to facilitate implementation of outcomes contained in the General Programme of Work for improving access to quality essential health services; and to improve essential medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and devices for primary health care.

The Center for Reproductive Rights, Inc.

7. The Center for Reproductive Rights, Inc. is a nongovernmental organization established in 1992 and based in the United States of America with a presence in the African Region, the Region of the Americas and the European Region. The entity seeks to advance reproductive rights as fundamental human rights at the global level, by promoting public awareness of laws and policies affecting human health and reproduction, and following up on the treatment of reproductive rights in different parts of the world.

8. The entity is governed by a board of directors comprised primarily of members with a background in nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions and private sector entities. Its sources of funding include contributions from individuals, governments, intergovernmental organizations, philanthropic foundations, and private sector entities.

Activities carried out with WHO during the period 2021–2023

9. The Center for Reproductive Rights, Inc. has been advancing WHO’s work on reproductive health and rights by advocating for legal progress at national and international levels on related topics, in alignment with WHO’s recommendations, standards and public health messages.

10. The entity has also supported the dissemination and implementation of WHO technical guidance on sexual and reproductive health, and used these resources in advocacy materials addressed to different audiences at global, regional and national levels. It has also provided technical input for WHO’s consideration on different subjects, including on the latter’s research agenda, and on access to sexual and reproductive health in humanitarian and emergency settings.

Planned collaborative activities with WHO for the period 2024–2026

11. The three-year plan for collaboration builds on previous collaboration and will continue to support WHO’s work on promoting and disseminating WHO guidance, statements, tools and strategies on sexual and reproductive health and human rights, as and when appropriate, at global, regional, and national levels.

12. The entity will continue to support WHO’s technical work on advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights in humanitarian and emergency settings, and provide technical input for WHO’s consideration to inform efforts to strengthen research capacity on the social and other determinants of sexual and reproductive health.

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