



Statement to the 74th World Health Assembly WHO reform: involvement of non-State actors in WHO's governing bodies

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Thank you for the opportunity to deliver this statement on behalf of World Cancer Research Fund International and Union for International Cancer Control, supported by NCD Alliance.

We welcome efforts by WHO to address the challenges, especially in the last year, presented in the engagement of civil society in WHO governing body meetings.

The informal civil society meeting enabled good engagement between WHO secretariat and CSOs, especially from smaller organisations, low- and middle-income countries and people with lived experience who have previously faced multiple barriers to participating in Governing Bodies' meetings in Geneva. The meetings demonstrated the value, depth and diversity of civil society expertise across all agenda items to decision-makers.

With refinement, we would support the informal meetings being repeated, but they must not be a replacement for civil society interaction in official proceedings, especially in terms of Member State engagement.

To achieve more effective engagement of civil society, we call on WHO and Member States to consider that:

- WHO governing bodies' agenda and documents are consulted on with civil society as standard practice ahead of the informal meetings to facilitate preparation and active participation with Member State representatives.
- During informal meetings, modalities are used to support the most efficient use of time for all actors and mechanisms to ask questions are streamlined and simplified on one single platform.
- Detailed information on voluntary constituency statements is provided in good time to enable constructive participation and to support coordination of a wide range of CSOs.
- CSOs are engaged in co-hosting formal side events.

We await the follow up report at the 150th Session of the Executive Board on feedback on constituency statements and informal meetings and hope the report takes into account civil society feedback.

Finally, we also encourage the WHO Regional Committees to develop civil society engagement strategies using virtual platforms to improve the effectiveness and equity of engagement.