

# Letter Regarding Proposed Amendments to Rules Governing the Involvement of Non-State Actors in WHO's Governing Bodies

Letter | 3 February 2020 | [Download PDF](#)

There are serious repercussions for the effectiveness and legitimacy of [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) meetings in the proposals to amend the rules on non-State actor (NSA) interactions with governing bodies (EB146/33).

The changes will curtail the mandated contribution that civil society makes to governing bodies, technical briefings and all other WHO forums. We are joined by representatives of ten civil society organisations to voice specific concerns regarding the proposed changes.

We agree there is a clear and present need for reform of non-State actors' participation within the framework of WHO work in global health. Reform should serve the purpose of streamlining meetings but cannot ever be at the expense of transparency and non-State actors engagement. Under no circumstances should changes in the rules of engagement result in a reduction of meaningful contributions from stakeholders. Discussions and approval of the milestone resolution on transparency at the 72nd WHA are examples of civil society collaboration with Member States to reach consensus on a complicated and sensitive issue.

While we commend the secretariat for their consideration of the issue, EB146/33 does not offer a solution to the perceived problems inherent in the existing arrangement, which, as stated above, we agree requires amendment. Change is necessary, not because the existing arrangement is time consuming and cumbersome, but because it is undemocratic and does not engender meaningful participation of stakeholders.

We call on WHO to organise a technical briefing with NSA before any actions or pilot strategies are introduced—either before or during the next WHA—to discuss the issue with those most affected. We ask the EB146 to endorse this proposition.

[Read the full letter here](#)