TOWARDS A NEW POLICY OF WHO ENGAGEMENT WITH NGOs

Consultation with NGOs
18 October 2012
NGOs in WHO Reform

● Decision WHA 65 (9) requested the Director-General:
  – to present a draft policy paper on WHO’s engagement with nongovernmental organizations to the Executive Board at its 132nd session in January 2013

● This forms part of the component of improving the engagement with stakeholders in the WHO Reform process
Principles given by the WHA to guide WHO engagement with stakeholders

- intergovernmental nature of WHO’s remains paramount

- development of norms, standards, policies and strategies must be based on the systematic use of evidence and protected from influence by any form of vested interest

- need for due consultation with all relevant parties following the principles and guidelines laid down for WHO’s interactions with other parties;

- any new initiative must have clear benefits and add value in terms of enriching policy or increasing national capacity from a public health perspective

- building on existing mechanisms should take precedence over creating new forums, meetings or structures, with a clear analysis provided of how any additional costs can lead to better outcomes
Towards a three pronged New Policy

- To foster **collaboration** delinking it from the designation in official relations
- To enhance **consultation** regardless of official relation status
- To enable participation in WHO Governing Bodies through an **accreditation** process not conditional on working relations with WHO.
Collaboration

Improving the modalities for engaging nongovernmental organizations in the different WHO activities at country, regional and global level in pursuit of the WHO General program of Work
Consultation

Seeking the views of nongovernmental organizations in the development of health policies and strategies
Accreditation

Updating the practices and the criteria for accreditation and of defining modalities of NGO participation in the Governing Bodies meetings
Current practices - Collaboration

- Modalities of collaboration between WHO and NGOs span throughout the six core WHO functions.

- Collaboration takes place at HQ, Regional and Country level.

- The majority of relations are informal.

- Need for a component in the policy that fosters and guides WHO collaboration with NGO's at global, regional and country level.

- Need for appropriate safeguards to address potential conflict of interest.
Current practices-Consultation

- The provision on *informal relations* in the 1987 Principles enables WHO and NGOs to consult independently of Official relations status.

- NGOs are consulted in the formative stages and revisions of WHO policy development.

- Need for a more proactive and systematic approach to boost this dimension of the engagement and for greater inclusiveness.

- Possibility of a global civil society mechanism, of hearings and of global, regional and country policy dialogues.
Current practices-Accreditation

- Efficiency and relevance of the Official Relations System has been questioned
- There are 183 international NGOs in official relations with WHO
- Number of NGOs in Official Relations is less than the number of NGOs in informal relations
- The Official relations System is not effective for WHO Regional and Country relations
- The principles adopted in 1987 have served as an accreditation policy but not offered a framework for guiding and fostering consultation and collaboration processes
Since 1948 NGOs in official relations are automatically invited to participate into WHO governing bodies.

They may speak after member States at the Governing Bodies and they have to submit their statements 24 hours in advance.

Less than 50% of the NGOs in official relations attend the WHA and less than 30% the January EB sessions.

Need for delinking accreditation from collaboration and to end the prior scrutiny of statements.
What WHO expects to get from NGOs participating in this consultation?

- Your views on the proposed approach for the new policy
- Your inputs on the issues that need to be addressed in each of the components of the new policy
  - Collaboration
  - Consultation
  - Accreditation
- Your perspectives on whether any other issues should be considered in the new policy