

CSI REVIEW SERIES

**Analysis: NGO participation in WHO Governing Bodies,
1998 to 2002**

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Civil Society Initiative

External Relations and Governing Bodies



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

NGO participation in WHO Governing Bodies: analysis of the practices from 1998 to 2002

Executive Summary

Attendance and size of NGO delegations

- Total number of NGOs in OR was 193. Of those some 50 attended the EB and 75 attended the WHA.
- Percentage of NGOs attending EB in 2002 was 28% and WHA sessions in 2002 as 37%.
- On average during this period there were some 120 NGO participants at the EB and 330 NGO participants at the WHA, corresponding to about 1/4 and 1/5 of the total number of participants.
- NGOs attending the EB and WHA had, on average, less than 5 participants.
- Five NGOs at the WHA and two NGOs at the EB usually had very large delegations (more than 20).

NGO Statements

- The number of statements per session varied between EB sessions, and slightly increased at the WHA over the years.
- The total number of NGO statements in relation to the total number of NGOs attending the GBS sessions has been one in four.
- The average number of NGO statements per session was approximately 10 for EB and 15 for WHA.
- Most NGOs intervened in the annual GBS sessions only once or twice.

Member State Delegations

- The number of delegates from Member State delegations registered with a reference to their link with an NGO has been very small.
- 9-11 delegations included delegates relating to NGOs.

1. Introduction

NGOs in Official Relations (OR) with the WHO enjoy a number of privileges, including the right to attend the sessions of the WHO governing bodies (GBS) and the possibility to speak before those bodies.

This paper aims at analysing the practice of the last few years in this respect¹, as a part of the overall review of the OR system.

2. NGO attendance

2.1. Number of NGOs and NGO participants attending the sessions

In the last few years, the number of NGOs attending the Governing Bodies has been more or less constant²: around 50 NGOs for the EB, and 75 for the WHA. In other words, only 19 to 49 % of NGOs in OR attend governance meetings.

Table 1: NGO participation at the January session of the EB in the years 1998-2002

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Number of NGOs attending the session	59	72	51	51	54
Percentage of NGOs attending the session in respect of the total number of NGOs having OR³	30%	37%	26%	26%	28%

Table 2: NGO participation at the WHA in the years 1998-2002

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Number of NGOs attending the session	94	76	75	74	71
Percentage of NGOs attending the session in respect of the total number of NGOs having OR	49%	39%	39%	38%	37%

¹ The material used for this analysis is based on the WHA51-54/REC 2 and 3, and the EB101, 103, 105, 107, 109/REC2. In addition, some minor studies carried out by CSI staff are included.

² The EB 103 and 51st WHA were exceptional, with an usual high attendance by NGOs.

³ For the purpose of the present paper, the total number of NGOs in official relations with WHO is considered to be 193 (see the home page of WHO(www.who.int/ina-ngo)).

2.2. Size of NGO delegations

The total number of NGO participants attending the EB is approximately 125, while those attending the WHA is approximately 330. The average size of an NGO delegation at the WHA is also larger than it is at the EB; respectively 4.3 persons against 2.2. The average figure is influenced by the fact that 5 NGOs have very large delegations at the WHA, i.e. above 20 representatives⁴. At the EB there are two exceptions⁵.

Table 3: Number of persons in NGO delegations in the EB (Jan) in the years 1998-2002

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total number of persons in NGO delegations attending the EB	130	125	118	125	123
Average size of a NGO delegation	2.2	1.7	2.3	2.5	2.3

Table 4: Number of persons in NGO delegations in the WHA in the years 1998-2002

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total number of persons in NGO delegations attending the WHA	401	320	333	339	359
Average size of an NGO delegation	4.3	4.2	4.4	4.6	5.1

Table 5: Number of persons in each NGO delegation at the EB (Jan.) and the WHA in the years 1998-2002.

NGO delegations with:	1998		1999		2000		2001		2002	
	EB	WHA	EB	WHA	EB	WHA	EB	WHA	EB	WHA
less than 5 representatives	51	77	67	60	46	56	48	56	50	54
5 to 10 representatives	6	10	4	8	2	11	1	8	2	5
more than 10 representatives	1	11	1	8	3	8	2	10	2	12

⁴ These are mainly the *Global Health Council, International Federation of Medical Students, International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Associations, International Organization of Consumers Unions (Consumers International)* and the *World Federation of Public Health*.

⁵ *International Organization of Consumers Unions/Consumers International* and *International Special Dietary Foods Industries*.

3. NGO statements

3.1. Number of NGO statements in comparison with number of NGOs attending GBS

The number of statements by NGOs in relation to the total number of NGOs attending have varied at the EB and slightly increased at the WHA. In the last two WHA sessions the proportion between the number of NGO statements to the number of NGOs attending have been one to four.

Table 6: Number of NGO statements in relation to number of NGOs attending the EB and the WHA.

Year	Number of NGO statements ⁶		% of NGO statements in relation to the total number of NGOs attending	
	EB	WHA	EB	WHA
1998	14	13	24 %	14 %
1999	6	15	8 %	20 %
2000	12	15	23 %	20 %
2001	8	18	15 %	24 %
2002	13	18	24 %	25 %
Average number of statements	10.6	15.8	18.8 %	20.6 %

3.2. Frequency of NGO statements

The majority of NGOs intervened in the GBS sessions only once or twice during the last few years. However, one organization, the *International Organization of Consumers Unions(Consumers International)*, has made statements at all sessions.

Table 7: Total number of statements by individual NGOs at both EB and WHA in the years 1998-2002

Number of statements delivered by an NGO on the overall period	Number of NGOs	% in respect of all NGOs statements in the years 1998-2002 (45)
10	1	2 %
7	3	7 %
6	4	9 %
5	4	9 %
4	2	4 %
3	6	13 %
2	7	15 %
1	18	40 %

⁶ In the Annex II more detailed information could be obtained on the number of CSO statements.

4. Delegates in Member State Delegations registered with a reference to their link with an NGO

Some Member States include NGOs in their delegations and declare it; others do not. The study based on the last three years shows that the number of delegates in Member State delegations registered with a reference to their link to NGOs is very small, i.e. only between 9 and 11⁷.

Table 8: Number of delegates in member state delegations registered with a reference to their link with an NGO.

Number of delegates in Member State delegations registered with a reference to their link with an NGO	1998	1999	2000
1	4	7	6
2	6	1	3
3	0	1	2

5. List of Reference tables (available at CSI on request)

Table I: NGOs and their attendance at the annual sessions of WHO between 1998-2002, EB: 101,103,105,107,107 and WHA: 51,52,53,54.

Table II: NGO statements at the EB and the WHA from 1998-2002.

⁷ Countries having mentioned the link between one of their delegates and a NGO for
(i) one year; (9) Algeria, Brazil, the Democratic Republic of Congo, France, Latvia, Mexico, Tanzania, Thailand
(ii) two years; (3) Finland, Libya, Swaziland and
(iii) three years; (5) Canada, Cyprus, Norway, Sweden, USA.