



May 20, 2024

To: WHO Programme, Budget and Administration Committee (PBAC)

Subject: Support to uphold the WHO FENSA Process

CC: WHO Executive Board

Your Excellencies,

As Non-State Actors in Official Relations with WHO and civil society organizations (CSO) from around the world, we are gravely concerned with the decision of the Executive Board, at its 154th session, to request the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee (PBAC) to conduct further discussions regarding the WHO Secretariat's recommendation for CSOs to enter into official relations with WHO.

According to the report EB154/37, the WHO Secretariat reviewed applications to ensure that the criteria and other requirements set out in the Framework of Engagement with Non State Actors (FENSA), including due diligence, were fulfilled. Based on this thorough assessment, the WHO Secretariat recommended the admission of those CSOs that met the criteria. **During discussions under this item, States unanimously reiterated their confidence in the FENSA framework and in the due diligence process the WHO Secretariat used to affirm that all applicants passed the criteria. We therefore call on the PBAC to recommend to the Executive Board the admission of these CSOs in official relations as per the recommendations provided by the WHO Secretariat.** Any other decision will undoubtedly undermine the integrity of FENSA, which was negotiated and approved by Member States themselves, and affect the credibility of the WHO.

To maintain public confidence and credibility as a scientific and technical agency, WHO and its Member States must make decisions based on evidence and data. There is no credible reason for going against the WHO Secretariat's recommendation. **We ask that Member States adhere to the objective criteria used to evaluate NSA applications and uphold the recommendations and sovereignty of the WHO Secretariat.**

Moreover, we are concerned that the decision of the Executive Board contributes to further shrinking civil society space in global health, an issue that non state actors and the broader civil society have been bringing to the attention of the WHO and its Member States for many years. **We call on all Member States to conform to the WHO constitution** which states that the Organization should *promote cooperation among Member States and with others to promote and protect the health of all peoples*. As such, the FENSA is critical to broadening WHO's engagement with the growing number of organizations that contribute to the "advancement and promotion of public health."

NSAs, particularly civil society organizations, serve on the frontline of public health. Many NSAs include people with lived experiences that continuously face growing public health challenges. These actors understand the public health problems and needs of populations, particularly those poorest and most vulnerable. Without a strong FENSA that is respected and upheld by Member States, WHO will be unable to properly engage with these actors and fulfill its mandate to create a healthier and safer world for everyone.

Sincerely,

To sign onto this letter please click [here](#).