



Global Social Observatory

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Statement delivered by Katherine Hagen, Executive Director of the the GSO

at the

Informal consultation with Member States and non-State actors on WHO's engagement with non-State actors

The Global Social Observatory commends you, Director-General Chan, for presiding over this initiative and supports your search for a better understanding of the many views on how the WHO might evolve in its rules of engagement with nonstate actors. The mission of the GSO is to facilitate dialogue and disseminate information on social issues in order to encourage all interested stakeholders to engage in a broadened search for solutions and in finding a common ground for working together. We understand that an important distinction is that the GSO provides a neutral forum that is separate from the intergovernmental processes of the WHO and other UN agencies, but it is also the case that in our programs, we seek to engage participants who embrace certain shared values and principles, including:

- A shared commitment to promoting an integrative and holistic approach to sustainable development;
- A shared respect for basic human rights, cultural diversity and gender equality;
- A commitment to engage in areas of common interest
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We want to highlight the suggestion by Professor Zelltner for bridge building between and among different nonstate actors. The GSO is a unique forum that encourages this kind of cross-stakeholder dialogue, and we believe it is useful for all stakeholders to listen and learn from others in an interactive format. In one of our current projects, we are developing guidance on conflict of interest in a multi-stakeholder setting, and the very three changes to the management of engagement that are proposed in your discussion paper are management approaches that we have identified as important, that is:

- A due diligence approach to examining all interests
- A risk-based approach to identifying conflicts of interest and
- Increasing transparency
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The GSO has worked in several settings where the concern about undue influence of powerful groups has been raised but where the key message is that they are indeed there in the world around us and that transparency, due diligence and risk management are the preferred ways to counter the possibilities of undue influence.

As you explore the possibilities for differentiation among the different categories of nonstate actors, we encourage that you do so within the context of applying the overarching principles you have listed in the discussion paper to all categories of nonstate actors and to incorporate the approaches on due diligence and risk management and with a particular emphasis on the benefits of transparency.

Thank you.