

IOGT International Official Statement WHO EB 144

7.1 WHO Reform Process EB144/34

23.01.2019

Honorable Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, Director General, I thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

This statement is delivered on behalf of IOGT International supported by Medicus Mundi International and Wemos.

We all agree WHO governing body meetings need to be improved urgently to create an effectively structured and really interactive discourse, fit for finding the best decisions, founded on sound scientific evidence and rooted in the realities of the people and communities affected by these decisions.

We are engaging in these proceedings to do just that: represent and amplify the expertise, know-how and needs of the people and communities affected by and committed to addressing health-related problems. In this spirit, the Director General has lauded “civil society partners” as “unique and powerful voices of the people that WHO serves.” Unfortunately, this sentiment is not reflected in the EB documents, neither in the proposed program budget and nor in document EB144/34. In fact, three out of four recommendations will potentially hinder, restrict or complicate meaningful civil society engagement. We are committed to do our part in improving WHO governing body proceedings but if our time and space will be even more limited, we ask that our engagement becomes more meaningful. IOGT International commits to organizing and preparing ourselves in collaboration with CSO partners to craft joint statements. But we ask the Secretariat and Member States to create proceedings more conducive to our efforts.

We would like to make 4 concrete and constructive proposals:

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- 1) Institute national civil society consultations in advance of governing body meetings,
- 2) Include civil society representatives in the country delegations to WHO governing body sessions,
- 3) Conduct proper hearings, timely and transparent consultations that feed into participatory decision-making processes.
- 4) Embrace the diversity in expertise and issues covered that we as civil society bring to these meetings and proceedings.

I thank you for your attention.

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