



*70th World Health Assembly – Geneva, May 2017*

IBFAN statement on Agenda Item 23.3: Engagement with non-State actors

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As one of WHO's longest-standing partners IBFAN, supported by FIAN International, hoped that Member States would ensure that WHO could emerge from the Framework for Engagement with Non State Actors (FENSA) process as the lead agency in public health, able to fulfil its constitutional mandate and not just as one more actor in a 'multi-stake-holderised' global health architecture. Through ill-defined terms such as 'partnership' 'stake-holder' and 'trust' corporations and philanthropies are now claiming the right to participate and shape public health decision-making processes, side-lining governments, the UN and peoples' human rights.

Member States, while aware of these concerns, adopted FENSA with promises that there would be due diligence and increased transparency and that WHO would "*exercise particular caution...when engaging with private sector entities ...whose policies or activities are negatively affecting human health..*"

The Gates Foundation application for Official Relations was a test of FENSA's thoroughness. It could and should have provided clarity on the relationship between WHO and the Foundation. That the Foundation has made substantial contributions to many health initiatives is matter of public record. That it might have an influence on WHO's nutrition policy setting— for good or for bad – we make no judgement here – is also no secret. Less well known are its substantial investments in food and beverage industries – investments that were glossed over in the report as: "engagements with select members of the pharmaceutical... food and beverage...health care... industries in pursuit of our public

health goals.” In this way the FENSA process failed its first task and public trust that it will tackle the task ahead properly has now been severely damaged.

We follow the development of the FENSA handbook in the hopes that FENSA can be a safeguard – not a funding opportunity to replace the missing untied funding that WHO so urgently needs. FENSA should be reviewed and evaluated soon and the terms partnership and stakeholder defined. Thank you.