

People Health Assembly 3: Role of NGOs in National Health Systems and Global Health Policy – NGOs the good, the bad and the evil:

Public vs. Business interest NGOs actors in Global Health

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IBFAN Global Network



IBFAN was founded October 12th, 1979 now has over 250 groups in over 100 countries.

<http://www.ibfan.org>



Aims of IBFAN:

- Protect, promote and support breastfeeding in the health care system, communities and at the workplace
- Monitor appropriate marketing and distribution of breastmilk substitutes and complementary foods; - *and demand companies' compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.*
- Promote and support timely complementary feeding practices using adequate local food resources.

PINGOs & BINGOs

UN agencies including WHO :

- **Recognition of the important contributions of NGOs in area of public health**
- **Aware of their growth in numbers and influence in health at the regional, and national levels.**

BINGOs, PINGOs,??



- BINGOs - Business Interest non-profit NGOs that are set up by, represent or are closely linked to business interests ,
- PINGOs - Public Interest NGOs
- GINGOs - Government funded NGOs
- ??????? - BINGOs that pretend to be PINGOs

PINGOs & BINGOs

CIVIL SOCIETY :

- WHO groups all NGOs under the term CIVIL SOCIETY without distinction of their different interests which may be in conflict with the primary public health interest of WHO.
- This distinction is important particularly when industry becomes directly involved in the policy making process at WHO

Relations between WHO and NGOs

- Based on principles adopted in 1987.
- NGOs submit a 3 yr mutually agreed work plan and activities,
- Triennial reviews by the Board reviews
- NGOs in official relations can participate at WHO governing bodies meetings without the right to vote but entitled to make a statement.

CRITERIA for Admission

That the

- *“aims and activities shall be in conformity with the spirit, purpose and principles of the Constitution of WHO,*
- *shall centre on development work in health-related fields, and*
- *shall be free from concerns which are primarily of a commercial or profit-making nature”.*

NGOs in official Relations with WHO

- January 2012: 183 NGOs
- List includes NGOs whose membership is business organisations that pursue profit making interests,
 - Their ultimate accountability is to their shareholders and their whose goal is profit.

Examples of BINGOs

1. International Special Dietary Food Industries (ISDI)

Associations of the major infant foods manufacturers, many of which IBFAN continuously finds to be in violation of the WHO Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.

Members: International Association of Infant Food Manufacturers (IFM), Medical Nutrition International Industry (MNI), International Formula Council (IFC)-USA, Infant Nutrition Council (INC) - Australia/New Zealand, etc.



Examples cont:

2. Industry Council for Development (ICD):

working in the areas of food and nutrition.

Members: Ajinomoto, Mars, Nestlé, Unilever, Fondation Nestlé Pro Gastronomie.

3. International Federation of Pharmaceutical manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA):

Members: Abbott Laboratories, Bristol-Myers, GlaxoSmithKline, Johnson & Johnson, etc



Conflicts of interest

- BINGOS even with their expressed goals and missions that resemble those pursued by WHO,
 - will pursue their primary profit making goals if they find a conflict with public interest goals.

Lessons learnt:

- Through our monitoring experience of baby food industry and junk food marketing , food industry and their BINGOs persistently try to weaken regulations and convince policy makers that they can be trusted to not only 'self-regulate' but to be the trusted channel for health education messaging

Self regulation vs regulation

- Self regulation works only as long as companies want it to.
- Self regulation doesn't reduce the extent and impact of marketing. In fact the volume can increase.
- Self-regulation undermines governments' resolve to legislate to protect health. ¹

¹ Taken from a presentation at the European Platform for Action on Diet and Physical Activity by Corinna Hawkes, the International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington. Feb 2007

For analyses of the weaknesses of voluntary approaches:

<http://info.babymilkaction.org/node/466>

<http://info.babymilkaction.org/sites/info.babymilkaction.org/files/P1PHNhawkespledges.pdf>



2001 CSI and the 2002 Review Report

- In 2001, Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director-General of WHO established, the Civil Society Initiative (CSI) which aimed to look into how to improve the way WHO interacts with NGOs:
- **“Establish a programme of evidence collection, consultation with a broad range of actors and analysis – within and outside WHO – to identify and develop propositions for more effective and useful interfaces and relationships between civil society and the WHO.” July 2001 - July 2002).**

CSI review concerns

- The Principles offer no guidance in distinguishing between public interest NGOs and those linked to commercial interests.
- Report identified an important gap in **safeguards on conflict of interest:**
- Very nature of some organizations may represent a potential conflict of interest.

Review Report cont:

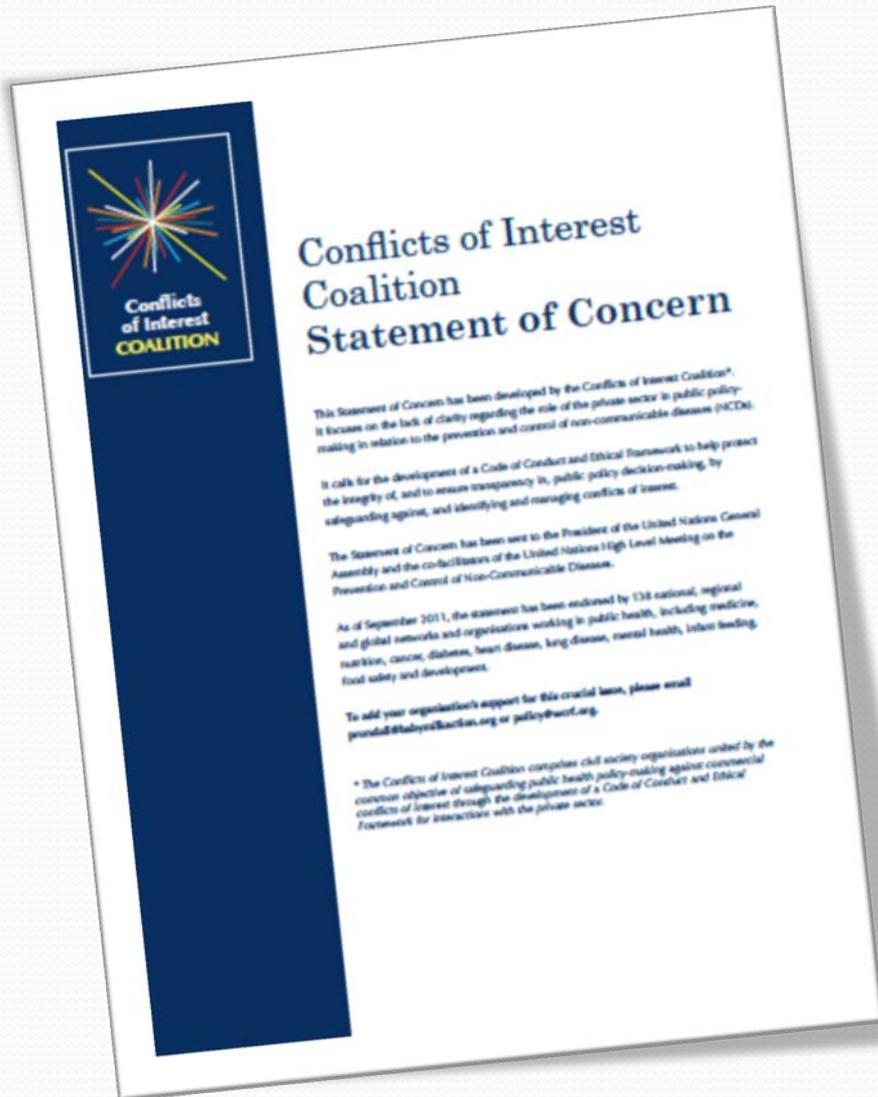
- *Principles* do not make provisions for such safeguards for conflict of interest.
- The closer the involvement of CSOs in the work of WHO and in the setting of policies, norms and standards, the more important it is for WHO to be aware of, make transparent and eliminate all risks of real or perceived conflicts of interest.



WHO Reforms cont :

- WHO's relations with NGOs is on the agenda of the WHO reform and MS have agreed for a review and update of these principles.
- 65th WHA requested the DG
 - *to present a draft policy paper on WHO's engagement with nongovernmental organizations to the Executive Board at its 132nd session in January 2013.*

Conflict of Interest Coalition



In 2011:

- 160 NGOs calling for:
- **Code of Conduct**
- **Ethical Framework**
- to identify, avoid and manage conflicts of interest
- keep BINGOs out of policy setting

<http://info.babymilkaction.org/node/458>

Democratising Global Health Coalition

- Has called on WHO to better define its constituencies and to distinguish between BINGOs and PINGOs.

Difficult task of Definitions:

- BINGOs identified above eg ISDI are immediately recognisable as they are front associations of the industries they represent; there are other NGOs which are more difficult to identify:
- An NGO may be linked with business thru various channels:
- Membership (the examples cited above)
- Funding: e.g. some patients groups are entirely funded by certain industries, that it is difficult to believe in their independence.

Definitions:

- Governance , eg. meaning that someone from a company is on the board of an NGO,
 - Particularly problematic are Alliances such as:
the **Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)** which does not take money directly from private companies but works closely with 600 companies to open markets for fortified foods.

Definitions cont 2:

- The **Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)** initiative encourages governments to enter partnerships with companies, and has to date no adequate principles of engagement dealing with conflicts of interest.



Definitions cont: 3

- **NCD Alliance:** It appeared to represent the position of many NGOs during the negotiations leading up to the **UN Political Declaration on NCDs**, however, all the while it was pushing for partnerships with the private sector. Since the formation of the **Conflict of Interest Coalition** the NCDa now acknowledges the need to safeguard policy-making against conflicts of interest. **IBFAN still has concerns about the NCDa:** its advocacy for greater involvement of the Private sector; its continued part funding by the pharmaceutical industry and the fact that one of the **4 members of the NCDa Steering Group**, is the **International Diabetes Federation** which has just gone into partnership with **Nestle**. (<http://info.babymilkaction.org/node/632>)

Call to WHO

- We are calling on WHO to re-launch the CSI to initiate regular dialogue with NGOs instead of the current process where a consultant is working on a report.
- This is a political issue which calls for a political process.
- As a first step, all front industry groups should be categorised immediately as BINGOs.
- This will constitute part of a comprehensive set of safe guards that WHO needs to put in place against COI.

THANK YOU



**COME JOIN
THE FIGHT**

6th–9th December, 2012.
New Delhi, India.

**BABIES NEED
MOM-MADE
NOT MAN-MADE!**

WORLD BREASTFEEDING
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LET'S PROTECT EVERY FEEDING MOTHER

