

Public Interest Civil Society Organizations' statement on ICN 2 process

We, public-interest civil society organizations, social movements and their networks representing people that suffer most from the different forms of malnutrition (under nutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight/obesity, and related Communicable Diseases and Non Communicable Diseases), are committed to working together to support, encourage and enable the implementation of robust, successful, equitable and sustainable actions to scale up nutrition.

That is why we have been actively engaged with or following the ICN2 process since the beginning and to the extent made possible by its organizers. We have also called repeatedly on the ICN2 JWG to improve its engagement with us. The informal meeting organized by FAO, on June 20, in Rome, was the first opportunity for a face-to-face exchange FAO Member States and FAO to express our views and give input to the ICN 2 political declaration, Framework for action and the process as a whole. We welcome this opportunity, even if not a part of the formal ICN 2 process.

However, as public interest organizations, whose important goal has always been to support international policy-making processes in the area of food and nutrition security and health in a way which protects and promotes the right to adequate food and nutrition and the right to health, we inform the JWG that we stated, at the onset of that meeting, our serious concerns with its multi-stakeholder model that brought private sector parties and CSO actors on the same footing. We have asked for the institution of a Civil Society Mechanism, similar to the CSM for the CFS to facilitate the engagement of CSOs with ICN2 processes. Such mechanism could guarantee the participation of all interested public interest CSOs, with special attention given to those representing the most affected. The “non-state” actor model adopted for that meeting brought powerful economic actors into policy-making discussions on the same footing with us, public-interest civil society organizations with a very minor representation of the most affected and their social movements. We challenge this model. For all the captivating statements of their public relations campaigns, private commercial entities, especially the private corporate sector, serve one primary interest, by constitutive nature and by fiduciary duty to their owners and/or shareholders. This is to maximize profit.

Some of you may argue that we are stating the obvious. Evidently, it is not so obvious to all. The semantic disguise of “non state actors” ignores this fundamental difference and blurs the lines between those that work for public interest and those who do NOT, and by mandate cannot.

We strongly object to this approach as we raise concern over the scenario of inviting a fox to build a chicken coop.

1. Why must (Member) States - and all of us - enter into closer relations with corporations as indispensable ‘stakeholders’ in decision making processes?
2. Why must we ignore the blurring of the nature and roles of actors through terms such as ‘stakeholders’ and ‘non-State actors’?

We need responses to these questions, otherwise all policy processes risk to continue following the path charted out by the World Economic Forum’s Global Redesign Initiative (WEF-GRI). According to the WEF’s vision for future global governance, key global public issues can be removed from UN agencies’ agendas whenever they risk resulting in policies

or regulations 'unfriendly' to profit maximisation. "Stakeholderisation" blunts necessary political conflicts, brings TNCs in as the indispensable 'stakeholder' in any policy-making arena. We are concerned that this model results in a loss of democratic principles, diverts attention from the role of corporations in causing malnutrition, in all of its forms, and the urgent need for regulation. It could simultaneously destroy the accountability of the UN to the people and the people's trust into the United Nations system and in the short term and in view of the ICN2 outcome, result in a policy document which is not in the best interest of the affected populations.

We want to call on you to reflect on our concern and to adjust the ICN2 model accordingly. Until then, while we continue engaging in the process, we shall not allow our participation in informal or formal consultations to be used to legitimize neither this process nor its outcome.

We are ready to dissociate from both, if necessary.

26 June 2014.

FIAN International (Global)
GIFA/IBFAN (Global)
Peoples' Health Movement - PHM (Global)
World March of Women (Global)
Crocevia (Italy)
Terra Nuova (Italy)
Alianza de la Salud Alimentaria (Mexico)
Proyecto AliMente (Mexico)
WEMOS (The Netherlands)
The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Global)
World forum of fisher peoples - WFFP (Global)
Habitat International Coalition - HIC (Global)
Mazingira Institute (Kenya)
Movimento de Atingidos por Barragens - MAB (Brazil)
FIAN Nepal (Nepal)
Asian Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW). (Regional)
Friends of the Earth International (Global)
Transnational Institute (Global)
FETRAF/ CUT (Brazil)
Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) – (USA)
Urgenci International (Global)