



Progress report on accreditation of regional non-State actors to the Regional Committee

1. At its seventh meeting held in Cairo, Egypt on 16–17 February 2020, the Programme Subcommittee of the Regional Committee agreed to a proposal to grant accreditation to non-State actors not in official relations with WHO to attend meetings of the Regional Committee. The Subcommittee welcomed in principle the engagement with a range of stakeholders, noting that this would be in line with the WHO Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors (FENSA) adopted by the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly in May 2016. It was emphasized that the procedure would only grant entities the right to attend and speak at sessions of the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean; they would not have the right to vote, and nor would accreditation involve or imply authorization to undertake any particular programmes of work. It was felt that a transparent process would be needed for considering and vetting applicant entities to ensure that access to sessions was open to interested and relevant parties on a fair basis while avoiding potential conflicts of interest.
2. Accordingly, the Secretariat developed a proposed procedure for accreditation that included clear criteria and timelines, and presented a draft decision on the establishment of the procedure for consideration at the 67th session of the Regional Committee in October 2020. Previously, in September 2020, an informal consultation had been held virtually to discuss the proposed process and way forward. During this informal consultation Member States highlighted the important role of non-State actors in countries during emergency situations and their aftermath in the reconstruction of fragmented health systems, and welcomed the initiative while emphasizing the need for transparency and openness.
3. Following the adoption of resolution EM/RC67/R.5 by the Regional Committee at its 67th session, the procedure was established for granting accreditation to international and regional non-State actors not in official relations with WHO to attend future meetings of the Regional Committee. Applications were then invited from relevant non-State actors with a presence in the Region, and the procedure implemented in advance of the 68th session of the Regional Committee.
4. As part of resolution EM/RC67/R.5, Rule 2 of the rules of procedure of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean was amended by replacing the original sentence, “The Regional Director, in consultation with the Regional Committee, may also invite nongovernmental organizations to participate in the deliberations of the Committee as provided in section 5 of the ‘Principles governing relations between the World Health Organization and nongovernmental organizations’”, with the following text: “Non-State actors admitted into official relations with the World Health Organization pursuant to the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors are invited to participate in the sessions of the Regional Committee, as provided for in paragraph 55 of the Framework. The Regional Committee may also adopt a procedure granting accreditation to other international, regional and national non-State actors not in official relations with the World Health Organization to participate in its meetings, provided that the procedure is managed in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Framework of Engagement.”
5. In 2021, none of the four applications received was accepted due to nonconformity with the set criteria.
6. The call for interest will again be made in 2022 and applications will be reviewed in accordance with the agreed mechanism.