

Explanation of relations with World Health Organization (WHO)

<http://www.who.int/civilsociety/relations/en/>

Formal or official relations

Only international NGOs can apply for official relations. As of January 2015, there are 202 NGOs in official relations. While they were originally drawn from the medical and public health fields, NGOs with broader mandates have increasingly been admitted. Both private sector NGOs (not-for-profit business associations) and public interest/citizen grouping NGOs have official relations status under the common title of “NGOs”. NGOs in official relations are conferred privileges such as participation in WHO meetings, committees and conferences including those of WHO governing bodies and the right to make a statement at these meetings.

As part of the requirement for official relations, NGOs need to establish a joint programme of work and a 3-year plan with a technical department of WHO. Designated Technical Officers are appointed as the focal points for such collaboration. Admittance into official relations is authorized by a formal decision of the WHO Executive Board. A review process of these relations is based on 3-year reports and the drawing up of new work plans.

Regional offices use the list of NGOs in official relations to invite participation at Regional Committee and other regional meetings.

Informal or working relations

All other relations with NGOs are considered informal. NGOs that have informal relations with WHO at HQ, regions and countries outnumber those in official relations. The inventory undertaken of WHO (HQ) relations with NGOs revealed that out of a total of 473 established relations, 45% were with NGOs in official relations and 55% were with NGOs not in official relations.

Informal relations include a wide range of interactions. Although the informal status does not prevent NGOs from attending technical meetings or working successfully with a technical programme in WHO, these NGOs are not given the privilege to participate in, or to deliver a statement to, WHO’s governing bodies.

Pan Pacific Safe Community Network and WHO

PPSCN is working closely with WHO pending its designation as an NGO in Official Relationship with WHO. PPSCN supports the objectives and vision of the WHO and actively works to address the leadership priority of the WHO Twelfth General Programme of Work, ‘*reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases and mental health, violence and injuries and disabilities*’. WHO views the Safe Communities approach as an important means of delivering evidence-based violence and injury prevention strategies at the local level.

In 2014 the PPSCN began pursuing official relations with the WHO, and is currently in discussions around establishing opportunities to work on specific projects to advance mutual goals to develop sustainable, equitable, and transferable violence and injury prevention models at the community level. This will occur with the promotion of policies, strategies and programmes that address the burden of injury through the adoption of the Safe Community model and maximizing the impact of the delivery to reduce both the levels of injuries (intentional and unintentional) and the impacts such injuries have on their communities.

