



## Press Release

# Concerns loom about philanthrocapitalists hijacking pandemic treaty negotiations

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Geneva, Switzerland

At an online event held yesterday ahead of World Health Assembly's 76<sup>th</sup> session, civil society experts raised concerns about the influence of private and philanthropic foundations during the COVID19 pandemic and the ongoing pandemic treaty negotiations at WHO and overall policy development on various human rights.

Experts highlighted that there is hardly any oversight and it can be often difficult to estimate scale of the influence of these unaccountable private foundations, including the likes of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in their capacity to impact policymaking in the global development agenda, particularly in the areas of health, nutrition, environment and agriculture, among other key areas related to human and nature rights.

Karolin Seitz, Global Policy Forum said, "So far there has been a fairly willing belief among governments and international organisations in the positive role of private foundations in global development. However private foundations often push for inclusion of private sector and for multi stakeholder partnerships. But these partnerships ignore the democratically legitimated and privileged role governments and intergovernmental bodies have in global policy-making and risk undermining the credibility of publicly accountable bodies and weaken democratic governance."

Highlighting the case of Philip Morris International, Blanca Llorente, economist and tobacco control expert, Fundación Anáas, Colombia said, "The goal of Philip Morris International with the Smoke Free World Foundation is clear - an attempt to get back into the conversations at a time when the industry faces more obstacles in influencing public policy. Governments and Congress always have difficulties managing conflict of interest, and tobacco companies benefit when they muddy the waters with these tactics".

Focusing on the ongoing pandemic treaty negotiations, experts expressed urgent need for adoption of strong safeguard measures especially since the process, while led by countries, is [at risk](#) of undue influence of the private sector in all its forms.

"Inequity. It is of primary concern to global pandemic response. It is supposedly of primary concern to the treaty body formed to improve this response. Yet, this treaty body has established no safeguards against the disproportionate and undue influence of powerful, global

corporations and other private actors in all their variations. It's a delusion to think negotiations blind to inequity will culminate in a policy that effectively dismantles it," added Daniel Dorado, Corporate Accountability. He added there are important lessons to be learned from the global tobacco treaty (WHO FCTC) in effectively safeguarding global policy from vested commercial interests.

Nicoletta Dentico, Society for International Development highlighted, "The fact that the pandemic treaty negotiations at the WHO have practically removed any credible reference to prevention of pandemic determinants, and only concentrate on preparedness and response, have much to do with the pervasive role of private foundations in the very motives and conceptualisation of the WHO pandemic instrument. But solid medical science will tell you that the emerging anarchy of pandemic solutions and initiatives brings no promise for the future of people's health".

At a time when private foundations and philanthropists are more involved in the development agenda, measures are required to clarify the rules of the game and restore the level playing field in the global geopolitical arena.

### **About Geneva Global Health Hub**

The Geneva Global Health Hub (G2H2) is a Geneva based independent platform of over 40 civil society organizations working on global public health and advocating for a democratic global health governance. Website: [g2h2.org](http://g2h2.org) | Twitter: [@G2H2\\_Geneva](https://twitter.com/G2H2_Geneva)

### **Additional Materials**

- ❖ [Philanthrocapitalism in global health and nutrition: analysis and implications](#)
- ❖ [Open Letter to the WHO INB regarding the Pandemic Treaty](#)
- ❖ [Pandemic Accord Text Falls Short of Expectations](#)
- ❖ [Watch the event here](#)
- ❖ [Read more about event here](#)

### **Contact Us**

For interviews with the subject matter experts, quotes and other media requests please reach out to us

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