

**Joint statement at the 148th session of the WHO Executive Board - January 2021
Agenda Item 19.5: Report on the implementation of the Framework of Engagement
with Non-State Actors (FENSA) ([EB148/39](#))**

WCRFI & Movendi International supported by NCD Alliance remind WHO & member states that FENSA paragraph 44 commits WHO not to engage with the tobacco industry, & specifies that WHO “**exercise particular caution when engaging with private sector entities & other NSAs whose policies or activities are negatively affecting human health & are not in line with WHO’s policies, norms & standards, in particular those related to NCDs & their determinants**”.

We thank Member States for recognising this week that decisive action is needed to rapidly reverse worsening NCD trends, notably relating to alcohol, obesity & diabetes.

Alcohol, ultra-processed food & drink, & breastmilk substitute lobbies consistently undermine WHO & obstruct public health policy development & implementation, costing health & lives. Alongside the tobacco, gambling & fossil fuel industries they have framed themselves as partners to WHO, governments & UN agencies throughout the pandemic, as documented in NCD Alliance & SPECTRUM report ‘*Signalling Virtue, Promoting Harm*’¹. Diseases attributable to their commodities put populations at increased risk of coronavirus.

WHO & governments must decisively respond to tactics of health-harming industries:

We call on Member States to request

- WHO to apply paragraph 44 of FENSA to the alcohol & fossil fuels industries and cease engagement with these industries.
- Greater transparency from WHO on engagement with health harming industry entities.
- Guidance from WHO secretariat on identifying & managing conflict of interest & interference from industries associated with health harming products & practices.

We request governments & all stakeholders to

- Scrutinize private sector & hold them accountable for voluntary commitments, & to replace ineffective voluntary mechanisms with robust, evidence-based regulation to protect public health.
- Exercise utmost caution in contacts with representatives of entities whose products & practices can harm health - they are vectors of the leading cause of global deaths: NCDs.

¹ NCD Alliance and SPECTRUM, *Signalling Virtue, Promoting Harm - Unhealthy commodity industries and COVID-19*, September 2020: <https://ncdalliance.org/resources/signalling-virtue-promoting-harm#:~:text=Signalling%20Virtue%2C%20Promoting%20Harm%3A%20Unhealthy.COVID%2D19%20pandemic%20to%20date>.