

# Alliance Against Conflict of Interest (AACI)

## CONVENER

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AACI/2014/01

July 14, 2014

**Shri. Lov Verma**  
**Secretary**  
**Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**  
**Government of India**  
**Nirman Bhawan,**  
**Room No-156-A**  
**New Delhi,110011**

To,  
**The Secretary,**  
**Ministry of Women and Child Development**  
**Government of India**  
**Shastri Bhavan**  
**A- Wing (6th Floor)**  
**Delhi- 110001**

**Sub: Engagement with Private Sector through Conference on Nutrition Security**

Dear Sir,

Please refer to the letter No. Z 28020/77/2013-CH, Government of India Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (Child Health Division), on the issues of collaboration with private sector.

We would like to follow up on this and like to know any further development in this matter.

1. We appreciate the recent World Health Assembly Statement that India made on the issue of conflict of interests, on agenda item related to engaging with Non State Actors (NSA). The statement cautioned about INDIRECT FUNDING from industry harming human health.
2. While speaking on the Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN), Indian delegation mentioned establishment of Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn Child Health (RMNCH) Coalition as a major achievement.
3. We are concerned that the major partner in the Coalition, 'Save the Children' is steeped with Conflict of Interests it is supported by the food and pharmaceutical industry.
4. We are further concerned that MOHFW and MWCD have accepted to be host partners of the "South Asia Conference on Policies and Practices to Improve Nutrition Security on July 30-31, 2014" along with Save the Children.
5. As you may see that 'Save the Children', the main organizer of the conference is funded by the private sector companies including Pepsi, Coca Cola, Britannia, and several pharmaceutical companies (Attached prints from the websites). This demonstrates clear conflict of interests. Not surprisingly, one of the key themes for discussion at the conference is "Private Sector engagement".

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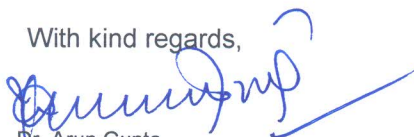
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- As public-interest organizations and individuals, whose goal has always been to support national and regional policy-making processes in the area of infant and young child feeding, food and nutrition security and health in a way which protects and promotes the right to adequate food and nutrition and the right to health, we think bringing private sector parties and CSO actors on the same footing is not right. This is like bringing powerful profit-making economic actors into policy-making discussions on the same footing as public-interest civil society organizations and individuals. Private commercial entities by constitutive nature and by fiduciary duty to their owners and/or shareholders have to maximize profit. This objective of the private sector is often in direct conflict with the government's duty to enhance health and nutrition, as in the case of promotion of junk foods. Such an engagement is therefore likely to distort the outcomes of the conference.
- Government of India is committed to prevention of NCDs, which requires strong regulatory approach on marketing of unhealthy foods. Entering into such partnerships with private sector entities engaged in production of processed and junk foods, it is our fear that the government's resolve can be diluted. It also sends out a message that is contrary to the desired policy.
- We would request MOHFW and MWCD, Government of India to consider withdrawing from such partnerships in principle, and set up a policy on prevention and management of conflicts of interests at the earliest to safeguard against such occurrences in future.

On Behalf of Alliance Against Conflict of Interest, and Working Group for Children Under Six.

With kind regards,



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Dr. Shoba Suri  
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