

Minister for Health and Prevention

Director General
Margaret Chan
World Health Organization
Avenue Appia 20
1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland



Dear Dr. Chan,

Fortunately, the course of the influenza A (H1N1) pandemic has not been as severe as we could have feared neither in Denmark nor in most other parts of the world, where the virus has hit as epidemics. It is my impression that you and your Organization handled the influenza A situation in a most responsible way in light of the information available during the course of time.

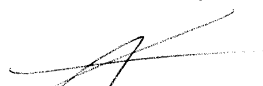
Nevertheless this very positive fact has in Denmark been accompanied by speculations among politicians and in the media concerning the interests embodied in the committees advising the WHO when responding to the pandemic. Specifically, some parliamentarians and newspapers have questioned the reasons for declaring phase 6 – which activated the vaccine guarantees in many countries – and speculated about possible links between the WHO and the pharmaceutical industry in this connection. However, we fully agree that by definition the world has an influenza pandemic with A(H1N1).

I welcome the WHO press release of 3 December 2009 which sums up the current practice concerning the use of expert committees in the WHO when responding to the influenza A pandemic. On the basis of this press release and pursuant to informal dialogue between my Ministry and your Organization (WHO principal legal officer Steven Solomon) I rest assured that the current practice concerning expert committees, the use of declarations of interests and nondisclosure of the composition of expert committees in general and the Emergency Committee in particular is based on thorough consideration and good reasons.

However, I also understand that these issues have not been subject to any debate or decision within the WHO governing bodies. On this background I would kindly encourage you to present a review of the current practice concerning the WHO's use of expert committees, declarations of interests and the question of whether or not the composition of expert committees (including the Emergency Committee) should be made public. I believe that getting these issues out in the open will further strengthen the WHO and dismantle speculations of the kind I have referred to above.

Please receive my best wishes for a Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely,



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