Nestle boycott remains – for now

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General Assembly has voted to defer a proposed ending of its 18-year boycott of Nestlé.

After animated discussion, a resolution was passed which effectively continues the boycott of Nestlé products at this time, but anticipates ending the boycott should the company gain acceptance by the FTSE4Good Index - through reaching FTSE4Good-prescribed standards of corporate responsibility.

The resolution says: "General Assembly resolves that if Nestlé obtains listing on the FTSE4Good Index, Mission Council be instructed to rescind the boycott on Nestlé products outlined in the Assembly 1992 resolution."

The URC's boycott on Nestlé products began in 1992 in protest at the company's policy of marketing and distributing breast milk substitutes to mothers in poorer countries.

Melanie Frew, convenor of the URC working group that reviewed the boycott, expressed the hope that Assembly's conditional lifting of the ban would create leverage for the URC to press Nestle over improving its ethical conduct.

Prior to adopting the resolution on Nestlé, Assembly passed a resolution to standardise its investment dealings with companies according to ethical criteria. The resolution reads:

"General Assembly agrees that, for investment purposes, all companies should be treated in accordance with our ethical investment policy."

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