

Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

"making humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries"

4th GENERAL ASSEMBLY 27 & 28 April 2006

Maison Internationale de l'Environnement II, Geneva

APPROVED MINUTES

Day 1: 27 April 9:00 to 12:30

Present:

Full Members: Chair: Denis Caillaux, (Care International), Treasurer: Andreas Kamm (Danish Refugee Council), Ton van Zutphen (World Vision Int.), Jane Cocking (Oxfam GB), Mamadou Ndiaye (OFADEC), Ken Caldwell (Save the Children UK), David Bainbridge (Tearfund), John Farmer (Medair), Tim Aldred (CAFOD)

Associate Members: Niels Dabelstein (Danida),

Independent Board Members: Antonio Donini, Astier Almedom

Guest: Andrew Lawday (consultant)

HAP Staff: Nicholas Stockton, Sabine Arrobbio, Zia Choudhury, Sheryl Haw, Darren Hart, Jennifer Birdsall, Emanuel Congo Minari, Basil Lucima

Apologies: WCRWC, Mercy Malaysia, MAP, ACFID, Magda Ali (Independent), Harsh Mander (Independent)

Absent: NRC, DFID.

1. Welcome from the Chair

The Chair welcomed every one to the General Assembly, and especially new participants: Astier Almedom, an independent Board member nominee, and Ken Caldwell, representing HAP's newest member, SCF-UK.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The draft agenda was adopted as proposed.

3. Election of Board Members

Due to the expiry of 4 mandates and two resignations (caused by Jasmine Whitbread's departure from Oxfam and Ellen Jorgensen's departure from WCRWC) plus one long term vacancy for an independent, there were 7 vacant seats. Nick explained the election procedures and distributed a voting form and information about the 8 nominated candidates. A secret ballot was then conducted.

4. Full Members' Accountability Workplan Implementation Reports

Danish Refugee Council

The DRC did not want to create a parallel planning structure and therefore integrated the accountability workplan into the corporate strategic planning process, and then made a senior programme advisor responsible to coordinating implementation. The key focus has been upon developing complaints handling capacities in programmes, first in Darfur, Caucasus and Uganda. All programmes should have complaints handling mechanisms by 2007. Impact monitoring has been important, and the results very encouraging. Reporting to beneficiaries now being tested in Somalia and the Balkans and from 2007 will try to implement throughout the DRC. The experience has been very positive as it has demonstrated a practical way of operationalising DRC's values of

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democracy and openness. The DRC work on complaints handling, including the joint DRC/HAP Complaints Handling Workshop held in Copenhagen in April 2006, has made a crucial contribution to the HAP standards development project. Also, the work on accountability almost certainly made the DRC less vulnerable during the "cartoon crisis". It has also made staff think differently about their work.

Medair

New accountability workplan agreed with HAP in September 2005. John Farmer was elected to HAP Board in 2005. In the field Medair has developed an accountability toolkit for programmes. In Pakistan Medair has established a complaints handling mechanism. In Darfur beneficiary surveys have revealed important programme issues that have helped to improve the work. However, field staff in Pakistan felt that HAP went beyond its advisory role and became too directive. Medair hopes that HAP will be able to provide more practical tools for field workers. This preferred focus is perhaps partly a consequence of Medair already having ISO 9000 certification.

OFADEC

OFADEC developed a workplan with the assistance of seconded HAP staff. Integrated accountability into general planning systems. So far mixed results, but now accountability is in the minds of all staff. In addition, senior member of staff has been nominated as the focal point for accountability and complaints handling. Refugees now taking part in annual planning process. OFADEC has received few complaints for two reasons. First, many programme issues have been dealt with. Second, the existence of the complaints mechanism is still not well known to beneficiaries. OFADEC would like more assistance in capacity building, especially in training on how to investigate difficult complaints. OFADEC feels that complaints handling is culturally compatible and not seen as a foreign imposition.

Oxfam GB

Oxfam very committed to beneficiary accountability, although it is a major challenge to achieve full compliance with the HAP Accountability Principles. Workplan was not wholly owned by the International Division. Humanitarian accountability competes for attention at the start of emergency programmes. Need to focus on simple "how to" tools for the field. These now being developed with the ECB2 project. Improving collaboration on consultation. Accountability indicators being developed for internal corporate objectives. Have developed a quality and accountability training package. Oxfam has also used the Mango checklist of financial management indicators, which have been very useful.

Tearfund

First workplan prepared in September 2004 and revised in December 2005. Accountability integrated in to (a) Tearfund Disaster Management internal quality standards, (b) project approval process, (c) partnership agreements, and (d) now into evaluation ToRs. This approach seems to have worked well as Tearfund's various quality commitments come as a single package and do not have the sense of being externally imposed. In the field, Tearfund has piloted complaints handling mechanism in Pakistan. A good experience that has improved programme effectiveness. In Darfur HAP is hosting the HAP accountability advisor. Accountability has also helped in security/acceptance strategy. In Afghanistan, budget information provided to community improved acceptance/security and also led to identification of case of financial mismanagement. Tearfund's experience suggest that it is easier and most effective to incorporate accountability at the beginning of programmes, and it is better to "lead by example" than trying to impose accountability principles on partners. Having dedicated staff also make a great difference.

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CARE International

Care is a very decentralised confederation that creates specific challenges to HAP's model of Accountability Workplanning. In 2004 CARE set up a shared emergency response group in Geneva and a humanitarian accountability reference group and focal point. The Workplan, also linked to Sphere and other commitments, used the self-assessment. The plan focussed upon "learning hubs" in Afghanistan, Indonesia and Cambodia, thereby covering several lead members and different management structures. Also participated in the New Emergencies Policy with other HAP members. Trying to mainstream the commitment at the strategic and institutional level. Accountability is not yet in performance management system. Results have been missed. More progress achieved in implementing Sphere. What seems to make a difference is having staff on the ground with an accountability mandate. But the accountability "landscape" is confusing due to the proliferation of initiatives. These need to be rationalised.

World Vision International

Working hard to put the house in order on accountability. Have now finalised a strategic intent document for the next 5 to 10 years. Now have a formal whistle-blower policy. Accountability is integrated into the four "quality pillars" of (1) project design, monitoring and evaluation, (2) accountability, (3) human resources and capacity building and (4) learning. Each reinforces the other and WVI is achieving progress in this way. Want to have toolkits available for all programmes with standards and indicators, and some of these now being developed through the ECB2 project. Need to introduce accountability slowly. The "stick" approach will not work. HAP field presence can be very helpful. Should HAP put an accountability advisor in to the Horn of Africa? Hoping to establish a standard practice of allocating 2% programme funds for the 4 pillars in all operations, as has been done in Pakistan. Testing an accountability tool in Somalia that involves beneficiaries from week 1. World Vision is one of the agencies participating in the Global Accountability Project.

CAFOD

Cafod also reports to Caritas Internationalis, which takes a close interest in HAP. Cafod has been a member of HAP for 1 year, but has so far failed to write an accountability workplan due to major internal change process. 13 staff trained in HAP principles and approaches and accountability now built in to project design, monitoring and evaluation. Now want to broaden out the promotion of the accountability principles to the organisation as a whole. Partners are also taking the accountability principles on board, although Principle 7 raises issues of concern with regard to imposing conditions on partners. Cafod wants to examine this issue in the standards development process. Cafod has appreciated HAP's field presence. It helps to focus the mind at the start of a new emergency, and HAP adds value through this monitoring, overseer function.

Save the Children UK

As a very new member SCF has not yet developed an accountability workplan. However, the accountability principles are clearly consistent with SCF's rights based approach to good security management. SCF is especially committed to making itself accountable to children in the framework of the rights of the child. SCF is developing a structured stakeholder consultation process. Keen to see how to work HAP accountability principles into project management cycle.

5. Associate Members reports

Danida

Danida is committed to the Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship, and support for accountability to beneficiaries is an integral part of this, and a good reason therefore to support

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HAP. However, HAP needs to be careful that it is not used as a beneficiary accountability alibi by donors.

Sida

As a donor Sida wishes to improve its dialogue with beneficiaries. Sida wants to strengthen the role of beneficiaries in assessing needs and evaluating responses, and would like to work more closely with HAP on these. HAP principles have now been included in Sida's new humanitarian funding guidelines.

6. Election results

Votes were cast as follows:

Full member Candidates

Shareen Abdul-Ghani ¹	6
Denis Caillaux	11
Ken Caldwell	10
Jane Cocking	9
Andreas Kamm	11
Mamadou Ndiaye	9
Ton van Zutphen	9

Independent Candidate

Astier Almedom	10
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Result: During the course of the election the Secretariat received notice from MAP that Belinda Coote had resigned her seat on the Board she is leaving MAP for a new post. As a consequence, there were 6 full-member vacancies at the Board and therefore all 6 full-member candidates were duly elected, as was the one Independent candidate.

¹ Candidate not present at the General Assembly

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Day 2: 28 April – 9.00 to 12.30

Present:

As per 27 April plus:

Associate Members: Elizabeth Narrowe – SIDA, Mikael Lindvall – SIDA

Invited guests: Alison Joyner – Sphere Project, Katarina Samara-Wickrama – ICVA, Andrew Tanswell (Strategic Planning Consultant), Nicholas Lanza – SDC, Christoph Jakob – SDC, Patrizia Palmeiro – SDC.

Election of Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer

Election for the posts of Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer were conducted as the two-year term of office of all three incumbents had expired. The statutes allow for officers to serve 2 x two-year terms.

Vote: Denis Caillaux and Andreas Kamm re-elected as Chair and Treasurer respectively. Antonio Donini elected as Vice-Chair. All three votes were unanimous.

Approval of Minutes of April 2005 General Assembly Meeting

Decision: The minutes of the General Assembly held on 27 April 2005 were approved.

The Humanitarian Accountability Annual Report – 2005

The report was prepared for HAP-International by an independent consultant (Andrew Lawday). It attempts to review the state of humanitarian accountability in 2005. It is intended as a "progress report" on accountability and quality management across the humanitarian system, among HAP Members and within the HAP Secretariat. This pilot edition has to be seen as a first attempt to assess what has been done, what works and what still needs doing. The Chair and the Executive Director invited members to make suggestions that would help improve the document.

Decision: The GA agreed to proceed with publication of the Annual Report, subject to various amendments and additions to the draft. Participants to send their suggestions to the Executive Director by email no later than 5 May 2006 (it is planned to have the final printed version by the end of May). The Chair agreed to sign off the final version for publication on behalf of the Board.

The Medium Term Strategic Plan

On the occasion of the last General Assembly, participants expressed the view that HAP's existing planning tool (2 year rolling workplan) was inadequate for longer-term planning and fundraising. The January 2006 Board meeting endorsed the Secretariat proposal to commission a consultant to help prepare a Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP). The draft presented to the General Assembly had the full backing of the Secretariat.

The Chair asked members to identify any "red flags" concerning the general direction of the MTSP. Various questions were raised, notably regarding the timeframe of the plan (statutes, certification process), the governance (balance of ownership for HAP), and the need for greater clarity on the certification process/methodology, but no "red-flags" were identified.

Decision: (1) The general direction of the Medium Term Strategic Plan was endorsed. (2) The Secretariat will revise the plan to take account of members concerns where possible. (3) More detailed implementation arrangements will be contained in the revised 2 year rolling workplan and budget for 2007-2008 for consideration by the Board in November 2006. (4) Draft proposals for

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governance changes will be presented to the Board in November 2006, and if endorsed, for approval by the General Assembly in April 2007.

The Audit Report – 2005

The Treasurer noted that the Audit report recommends the approval of the financial statements for the period January 1st till December 31, 2006, that a positive balance was carried forward, and for 2006 the funding situation was relatively good, with no major funding crisis in sight. The Treasurer thus recommended that the Audit report be approved.

Decision: The audit report was approved by the General Assembly.

AOB

There being no further business, the 4th General Assembly was adjourned at 17.00.