

# The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

*"making humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries"*

## 2<sup>nd</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY - APPROVED MINUTES

December 8, 2004

Maison de l'Environnement II, Geneva

### 1. Welcome from the Chair

Full Members: Chair: Denis Caillaux, (Care International), Ellen Jorgensen (Women's Commission), Treasurer: Andreas Kamm (DRC), Peter Klansoe (DRC), Lars Gustavson (World Vision), Ton van Zutphen (World Vision), Jasmine Whitbread (Oxfam), Maurice Herson (Oxfam), Mamadou Ndiaye (OFADEC), Nigel Timmins (Tearfund), John Farmer (Medair), Robert Schofield (Medair)

Absent: Jens Mjaugedal (NRC)

Associate Members: Niels Dabelstein (Danida), Mikael Lindvall (Permanent Mission of Sweden), Graham Tupper (ACFID),

Independent Members: Antonio Donini (nominee)

Observers: Brendan Gormley (DEC), Tim Alfred (CAFOD)

Staff: Nicholas Stockton, Zia Choudhury, Helena Zihlerl, Noria Mezlef

### 2. Introduction ("tour de table")

The Chair invited members to provide a brief verbal update on HAP-I related developments and issues since the last General Assembly in December 2003, and their expectations for the General Assembly.

**Care International (Denis Caillaux):** What does an "accountability deficit" mean? How can we achieve the standards? In a federation, like Care International we have added challenges, how to communicate HAP-I messages? Demand for accountability and support for HAP-I has come from field colleagues, which is refreshing and must be cherished. We want to think through the accreditation challenge, and how to move it forward. The time has come for accountability initiatives to come together. We must think of ways forward, and HAP-I can be a humble driver to bring initiatives together. Not necessarily through mergers, but at least all pulling in the same direction

**DRC (Andreas Kamm):** Agreed with the Chair regarding collaboration with other accountability initiatives. The DRC is very concerned about the funding issue HAP-I is facing.

**Tearfund (Nigel Timmins):** Senior management team has endorsed the accountability workplan. Did rename it "the beneficiary accountability project" to encourage all managers to adopt it. Have brought it into strategic planning and training programmes. One of the major constraints: Tearfund has gone through major internal management changes. Very wide views found during internal assessment. Looking forward to the practical work, to HAP-I Secretariat's assistance, peer support, the manual, the complaint mechanism etc.

**DEC (Brendan Gormley):** Executive Director of DEC, attending the GA as an observer. Half or more of DEC members are HAP-I members. DEC is also working on its' own accountability.

**Medair (John Farmer, Operations Manager):** Medair went also through a lot of senior management changes during 2003 (new CEO, new Desk officers). Trying to juggle priorities, here to learn more about HAP-I and the other members.

**Medair (Robert Schofield, Emergency Desk officer):** Here to learn and champion HAP-I work. Started some beneficiary feedback in West Darfur. Will report next year.

**Danida (Niels Dabelstein):** Confusion among the donors regarding the various accountability initiatives. Need better coordination.

**Women's Commission (Ellen Jorgenson):** have developed a work-plan, which will continue to evolve. Would like to apply accountability principles in Darfur where Women's Commission is now active. Want to learn about time frame for manual and standards development.

**ACFID (Graham Tupper, Executive Director):** ACFID already has a Code of Conduct, which includes complaints and compliance mechanisms. Have experience in accreditation process, which has self-assessment and peer review at its heart.

**Oxfam GB (Jasmine Whitbread):** Have managed to get some momentum going in Oxfam GB. Very crowded agenda and had to really push for HAP-I's place. Need more carrot and less stick. We need enabling approach. Interested in discussion around certification and accreditation, and phasing around that.

**Oxfam GB (Maurice Herson):** Have been involved for a long time. It is complex to get accountability ideas out to staff and to beneficiaries. There is no one string to pull, and we need to de-mystify the terms and processes. How good is good enough? We have a long way to go. Even in Darfur, HAP-I members are not talking to one another.

**World Vision International (Ton van Zutphen):** Have not been able to focus on it fully, as we have tried to embed the workplan within the overall strategic plan. As the newly appointed Humanitarian Accountability Director, will focus on ensuring implementation of workplan.

**World Vision International (Lars Gustavson):** WVI has been growing 15-20% per year for 5 years. Lots of change initiatives being promoted. Field staff recently counted 39 new initiatives. Looking at accountability from quality assurance and business cycle perspective. M&E, learning, accountability, and capacity building are the "four legs" of the "quality" table. We are now looking at 10 or so 'codes' which we follow, to make sure they find their way into our work. We need to measure the impact of this. Working on a 5-year business plan to see how to do this. Joint proposal to GATES foundation, where one main component is Accountability. Will be reviewing WVI minimum standards widely in 2005. Expect better understanding of what accreditation can mean. Also want see the different initiatives come together.

**OFADDEC (Mamadou Ndiaye):** Have completed the workplan and started to implement it. Will be discussing it with donors. Maximilien helped for 5 months. Expect to look at solutions for financial issues. Wish to have tool kit for supporting field activities.

**DRC (Peter Klansoe):** The workplan is done, tried to frame it as something on going, not something brand new. Accountability is now a framework, for the existing activities DRC have. Looking at complaints mechanism is one of the key issues. Also, looking at involving beneficiaries in the field, and encouraging the beneficiaries to be part of the planning process. Have money for more complaints mechanisms but need support from HAP-I. Challenges to discuss today: the complementarity of different organizations. In field missions, enable cooperation between HAP-I members. What tools can we have to encourage this? E.g. CARE and DRC could do this together in Somalia, for example. Set up a joint complaints mechanism. Want to discuss the accreditation proposal, and how to expand the membership.

**Antonio Donini:** Nominated to be elected as independent member. 27 years with UN, of 12 with OCHA. Now working with Tufts University. Looking at future of humanitarian work. Interested in accreditation, which is potentially ground breaking.

### **3. Adoption of the Agenda**

Agenda adopted without changes

### **4. Approval of Minutes of 2003 General Assembly Meeting**

Minutes approved

### **5. Chairman's Report**

a. Update on decision of the 2003 General Assembly

b. HAP-I Statutes.

The revised document as per 2003 General Assembly decision was distributed.

c. Procedure for Board Meetings

The revised document as per 2003 General Assembly decision was distributed.

d. Complaint procedures

The revised document as per 2003 General Assembly decision was distributed.

*Discussion:* the one-year term for the members of the Standing Complaints Committee is inappropriate. The same problem exists with the one-year mandate for the Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer of the Board.

*Decision:* The General Assembly agreed that all officers and committee members should serve for two years, and the Statutes should be amended accordingly.

e. Conflict of interests Policy

The revised document as per 2003 General Assembly decision was distributed.

f. Funding Strategy

The document presented and approved at the June 2004 Board meeting was presented for information to the General Assembly

*Discussion:*

**(1) Burden Sharing:** Key role of the members, so far has not been shared well. All HAP-I members have a responsibility to support HAP-I's fund-raising efforts. However the Secretariat has had to do the great majority of fund-raising in spite of it having less competence and comparative advantage than many members. The Chair observed that it is absolutely obvious that donors want more collaboration between the various accountability initiatives. As members of HAP-I we need to make progress on that and also be more vocal about belonging to HAP-I, and to encourage others to join.

**(2) Donors vs. Members funding:** In terms of funding we may need to distinguish between the two roles of HAP-I: a voluntary regulation process and a process of improving quality. With this distinction we might consider asking members to cover the costs of the self-regulation process and the donors to cover the costs linked to improving quality within the sector. It is clear that many donors expect the members to make a larger collective contribution to HAP-I. They also want to be reassured that they will not be asked to fund HAP-I forever, even though it is probably unrealistic to ask members to pay for quality assurance in a business that receives 95% of its funds from official donors. HAP-I needs to be independent but it is not very realistic for HAP-I to be fully self-financing from membership fees. Further donor education is necessary and members need to help on this. The moral and political arguments for accountability have been articulated but the "business case" for investing in quality management, and especially accountability to beneficiaries has not been properly developed. Smaller agencies may find it easier to comply with the HAP-I Accountability Principles, so there is no bias towards the big agencies apart from that created by the relative inaccessibility of the HAP-I Secretariat. (The proposed accreditation system is designed to address this problem).

**(3) Budget categories:** HAP-I needs to distinguish between its core activities to be funded by the members. Additional support could also be provided through, for example, seconding staff or financing specific programme activities. Another possible funding solution to be explored is to include in the members funding proposals to their donors a budget line for HAP-I work.

3 levels of funding were discussed:

1. Core activities: members should fund through cash and in kind.
2. Strategic activities (manual, research etc) where there is a need to coordinate with other accountability initiatives, and perhaps target funding to particular donors.
3. Service provision to members who wish to promote accountability: Could be managed as a reimbursable service funded either from members unrestricted funds, or included in specific programme budgets. HAP-I could ask for chunk of cash from big donors to support smaller agencies. This last category should be better clarified.

g. New Emergencies Policy

A group of members should be nominated to develop the protocol. It was agreed that a proposal would be circulated among the members in December.

h. Step by Step membership application procedures

The document was presented and adopted at the June 2004 Board meeting. It was noted that the document might have to be modified if there are many new applications since it is very time consuming.

## **6. Treasurer's Report**

### a. Summary of income and expenditure in 2003

Discussion: The 2003-2004 accounts will be audited in 2005. A balance of 460'598 CHF was carried forward to 2004. For 2005 and 2006, the cash contributions should come, but most probably late, HAP-I will most probably have a cash flow problem, with potentially damaging impact upon staff morale. In order to provide the General Assembly with audited figures regarding HAP-I incomes/expenditure in a timely manner the General Assembly needs to be held in April-May. This would also allow for an earlier approval of the following year's budget, and thus an earlier start for fund-raising.

*Decision: (1) 2003 Accounts approved pending audit in 2005 (2) The General Assembly will take place in April of each year.*

### b. Audit

The selection of an auditing company to review the account since June 2003 is in process. The audit should be finalized by end of March 2005.

*Decision: The Secretariat to circulate details of nominated auditing company for approval by members.*

## **7. Director's Report**

### a. Verbal report on Secretariat's activities since 2003 GA

See document attached: Highlights of Progress against HAP-I Secretariat Workplan in 2004

### b. 2004-2006 Revised Workplan

*Decision: The revised workplan presented and endorsed by the June 2004 Board meeting was approved by the General Assembly*

### c. 2005 and 2006 Budget

*Decision: The 2005 and 2006 budget presented and endorsed by the September 2004 Board meeting was approved subject to availability of funds*

### d. Accreditation proposal

*Presentation: (see Accreditation – The Way Forward)*

*Discussion: (1) clarification of terminology: "accreditation" is the process of certifying the certification body. For some, the word accreditation carries a lot of negative baggage. Perhaps instead we should talk about a system of verification through peer support. We may need to move away from the language of standards and accreditation, to active implementers, or verifiable signatories etc. (2) formalizing a difficult process too early can be dangerous. The process should include incentives. Should consider a 5-year time frame for developing such a system. (3) The Secretariat might consider first becoming a certification body so that we can test the model and learn from it. (4) The accreditation proposal will challenge the "raison d' être" of many of our networks. Could change the dynamics of power between existing networks. Need to have a debate supported by a PR campaign to build support for the idea. (5) The Secretariat needs to examine the ISO Quality assurance system to find out if it could be valuable or too rigid. (6) The proposed model makes sense for organization like Caritas. (7) For the donors perspective it makes perfect sense as a strategy, HAP-I will most probably face a lot of problems in implementing it*

*Decision: (1) The General Assembly approved the general principle of a decentralized accreditation system. (2) The Secretariat should "explore" the potential for developing the proposed accreditation/certification system with appropriate NGO networks and associations.*

- e. Proposed revision of Statutes arising from the Accreditation proposal

*Decision:* The Secretariat to modify the Statutes to allow non-operational NGO networks and associations to apply for full membership.

## **8. Board Appointments**

- a. Chair (renewal or election)
- b. Deputy Chair (renewal or election)
- c. Treasurer (renewal or election)

The Chair, Deputy Chair and Treasurer all agreed to stand for another year.

*Decision. (1) Denis Caillaux: re-elected as Chair, Ellen Jorgensen: re-elected as Deputy Chair and Andreas Kamm: re-elected as Treasurer*

*(2) The Secretariat to modify the Statutes to extend the period of office of the Chair, Vice Chair and treasurer from one to two years.*

*(3) The Secretariat to modify the "Complaints Against Members Agencies Procedures": to extend the period of office of the Standing Complaints Committee from 1 to 2 years*

- d. Members representatives (election)

There were no nominations for the two vacant full members seats.

*Decision: The General Assembly re-elected the current Board for a further year*

- e. *Independent members (renewal and election)*

Soren Jessen-Petersen and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf have completed their one-year mandate as independent members.

Dr. Magda Ali has been nominated by the Women's Commission for the seat of independent member ("Representative of humanitarian beneficiaries") and Mr. Antonio Donini was nominated by the Chair for the seat of independent member ("high standing representative"). The election of Dr. Ali is subject to confirmation that political affiliations would not compromise her standing as an independent member.

*Decision: (1) Denis to inform Soren Jessen Petersen and Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson that they were not nominated for re-election to the Board, and thus from 8 December 2004 are no longer on the Board of HAP-I. (2) Election of Mr. Antonio Donini and Dr. Magda Ali as independent members*

*(2) Ellen to ask Dr Magda Ali whether she has any political affiliations that might compromise her independence as a Board member and to inform the Chair accordingly.*

## **9. Any others business**

The Chair asked the board members to engage more and to have more regular contact between board meetings.

## **10. Date of Board meeting in 2005**

*Decision: The next board meeting will be held in April the day before the General Assembly.*

*Secretariat to send email to board members with proposed date for next board meeting and GA.*