

# HAP International Newsletter

## HUMANITARIAN ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERSHIP INTERNATIONAL

### Issue no. 2 – October 2003

HAP International is a membership-based international organisation committed to upholding the highest principles of accountability through collective self-regulation. Its vision is a humanitarian sector with a trusted and widely accepted accountability framework, transparent and accessible to all.

#### **HAP International history:**

The launch of HAP International is based on the findings of its pilot phase: the humanitarian accountability project, set up in 2001 to identify, test and recommend accountability mechanisms. Over the 2-year pilot period, some seventy staff and consultants have conducted field operations in Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, and Cambodia, undertaken five research projects, and engaged in a variety of advocacy activities on accountability. Their recommendations were endorsed by the Chief Executive Officers of fourteen humanitarian agencies in January 2003.

#### **AGREEMENT REACHED ...**

HAP International initiator representatives met on three occasions since May to review key documents and proposals related to the realisation of HAP International mission.

Agreement was reached on core issues, including: HAP International eligibility criteria and assessment tool; membership fees; minimum requirements for the Accountability Work Plan; the 2003-2004 Strategic and Operational Plan; HAP International core values; and principles guiding the HAP International complaints mechanism.

We are planning a meeting of the legal committee in November to review and agree on HAP International procedures for handling complaints.

#### **THE ACCOUNTABILITY WORK PLAN**

HAP International membership requirements state that within three months of joining, each new member is required to produce an accountability work plan. It enables the agency to show how it will work towards HAP International Accountability Principles and to secure and demonstrate ownership of humanitarian accountability. (See Briefing 2)

#### **HAP International Donors:**

AusAID, Danida, DFID, Norwegian MFA, Swedish SIDA.

#### **A NEW ACCOUNTABILITY NETWORK IN CAMBODIA**

HAP conducted a 6-month field trial in Cambodia from September 2002 to February 2003. One of the objectives of the field trial was to recommend and build consensus on a permanent accountability mechanism.

In March, agencies that worked with HAP organised a meeting to discuss the trial findings. 29 Participants (from national and international organisations as well as government) agreed to establish a Network, **HANet** - Humanitarian Accountability Network, (with a Khmer abbreviated name ANet).

4 international and 3 national organizations were selected for the executive committee: Oxfam, CARE Cambodia, World Vision Cambodia, Concern worldwide, Cambodia Red Cross, Urban Sector Group, Neak Akphihat Sahakum (NAS). Oxfam GB is temporarily hosting HANet, which is supported in this early stage by HAP International through the donation of its field trial equipment (funded by AusAid.)

HANet seeks to promote and strengthen accountability among agencies engaged in humanitarian action in Cambodia. (More information in future newsletters.)

#### **FOCUS ON MEDAIR**

Medair is the first organisation to officially join HAP International. Medair is a young, medium size organisation, focusing on forgotten crisis. Its headquarters are in Switzerland and it is currently providing humanitarian assistance to 1.8 million crisis-affected persons. ([www.medair.org](http://www.medair.org))

In order to maximise the impact of its limited resources, Medair has adopted a set of operating principles, four of which have been inspirational to Medair's contribution and commitment to HAP International.

- Stewardship achieved through transparency: "...We demonstrate optimal quality, honesty and effectiveness by making ourselves accountable and transparent to our donors and to the communities we serve..."

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- Professionalism aiming at Best Practice: *"we are committed to continuously learning..."*
- Focus on individuals: *"... we are committed to make our assistance as personal as possible"*
- Commitment to Partnership: *"Medair shares information, knowledge and resources with a broad variety of local and international organisations"*.

**Erik Volkmar, Medair Executive Director:** *"We are convinced that HAP International will play a leading role in shaping best practice for the international humanitarian aid of the next decade. This is why we are so eager to actively participate to it. The perspective of learning from our colleagues, as well as from individual beneficiaries, is very exciting."*

**INTERESTED IN JOINING?** Please contact us for additional information or consult our website for the full and associate member application forms and HAP International Constitution.

#### **MEMBERSHIP: PEOPLE IN AID**

HAP International has recently joined People in Aid, the international network of development and humanitarian agencies committed to enhance their impact through better people management and support. By joining People in Aid, HAP International is seeking both to further its collaboration with another accountability initiative and to enhance its own internal accountability. ([www.peopleinaid.org](http://www.peopleinaid.org))

#### **THE INITIATORS OF HAP INTERNATIONAL**

##### **INCLUDE:**

British Red Cross, CARE International, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (Cafod), Caritas Internationalis, Danida, the Danish Refugee Council, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Rescue Committee, Medair, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Office Africain pour le Développement et la Coopération (OFADEC), Oxfam GB, Sierra Leone Assembly of NGO's (Slango), Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, World Vision International.

#### **HAP INTERNATIONAL NEW PUBLICATION**

- Membership Application Forms
- Final Implementation Report of the Humanitarian Accountability Project February 2001-May 2003
- Accountability Work Plan: Requirements and Guidelines
- Beneficiary-Based Action Research in Cambodia

The launching of HAP International was reported in *AlertNet*, *Charity Times*, and *la Tribune de Genève*.

#### **OUR UNACCOUNTABLE ENVIRONMENT ...**

Recent events have sadly confirmed that UN and NGO actors are increasingly targeted because of who they are, what they do, and why they do it. This trend was most tragically illustrated by the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad in August. It was sadly re-confirmed over the following weeks: in September 4 relief workers were executed in Afghanistan, and in the first week of October a medical doctor was gunned down in Somalia.

These events are occurring in a context of increasing human insecurity, violations of humanitarian standards, and politisation and militarisation of humanitarian actions.

They are taking place alongside well-organised neo-conservative intimidations against actors issued from the international solidarity movement and the UN Charter (e.g. the American Enterprise Institute initiative to set up an NGO watchdog.)

Bringing to justice those responsible for the attacks and killings of civilians, including humanitarian workers, is essential. Increasing security measures to protect staff constitutes one of humanitarian agencies' primary responsibilities. Maintaining a striving humanitarian mission is everyone's obligation. There does not need to be opposition between all three objectives. Indeed, they are all based on and linked by one fundamental common principle: accountability: to war-affected communities, to those mandated to assist and protect, and for upholding humanitarian principles at the heart of our mission.