

# **Humanitarian Accountability Partnership**

*"making humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries"*

## **9<sup>th</sup> BOARD MEETING**

**2 – 3 November 2006**

**Maison Internationale de l'Environnement II – Geneva**

### **APPROVED MINUTES**

#### **Welcome and Introduction**

Chair: Denis Caillaux (Care International)

Board Members: Vice Chair: Antonio Donini (Independent), Treasurer: Andreas Kamm (DRC), Ken Caldwell (SCF UK), Jane Cocking (Oxfam GB), Shareen Shariza Dato' Abdul Ghani (Mercy Malaysia), John Farmer (Medair), Harsh Mander (Independent), Mamadou Ndiaye (OFADEC)

Absent with apologies: Ton Van Zutphen (World Vision International), Astier Almedom (Independent),

Absent: Magda Ali (Independent)

HAP Staff: Nicholas Stockton (Director), Sabine Arrobbio (Office Manager), Sheryl Haw Standards Development Manager – day 2), Jennifer Birdsall (Researcher – day 2), Andrew Lawday (communications consultant – day 2)

#### **2 November 2006**

#### **Adoption of Agenda**

Agenda adopted.

#### **Approval of Minutes of 8<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting**

1. Jane Cocking requested that Minute (11) concerning the Medium Term Strategic Plan be changed from: "Oxfam is concerned that the standards may be set too high" to "Oxfam is concerned that the standards may not be appropriate"

#### **Matters Arising**

2. The Director explained that the actual number of downloads of the 2005 Annual Report is about 1,000 and not 11,500 as previously reported. (The original over-estimate was caused by the web-host statistic confusing hits with downloads)

*Action (i) The Secretariat was requested to send Harsh Mander the induction information sent to Jane Cocking and Ken Caldwell.*

#### **Directors Report**

4. Nick presented the April to October 2006 Director's Report (Appendix 1)

#### **Standard Development Project:**

5. The Chair explained the ECB2 project for participants not familiar with it, providing some background information and emphasizing the complementarity and collaboration now achieved between this project and the HAP Standard Development Project. ECB2 is concerned with field practice while the HAP Standard bears upon the whole organisation.

6. Ken Caldwell asked whether there were major incompatibilities between the two approaches. Nick explained that the "Good Enough Guide" would be incorporated largely in its current form in to

the HAP Manual. Mamadou Ndiaye pointed out that ECB2 Manager, Pauline Wilson, joined the HAP team for the OFADEC field test in Senegal.

#### **New Emergencies Policy (NEP):**

7. The Secretariat confirmed that the Protocol will be re-drafted after consultation with member's lead contact persons. It was noted that the NEP was not invoked for Lebanon.

8. The joint HAP/ICVA Liberia initiative has not been implemented due to difficulties over timing and mission composition. (The World Vision Director of Child Protection withdrew from the mission following a visit to Liberia and consultations with WFP, UNICEF and World Vision field staff).

#### **Accountability Workplans:**

9. Save the Children UK and Mercy Malaysia workplans are due in November 2006 (and not 2007 as stated in the Director's report).

#### **Growth of membership:**

10. Following the HAP Accountability Event in Dublin, the Director made a presentation to senior staff of Concern. Expressions of interest have also been received from three US agencies (namely ARC, CRS and Save the Children US).

#### **Strategic Development:**

11. Proposals for new membership arrangements to be submitted to the Board/GA in April 2007: prior Board consultations to take place via teleconference.

#### **2006 Financial Report – year to date**

12. 2006 has been a good year; the organisation is on track achieving income against expenditure (90-95%). 85% of income received should be spent end of December.

13. Jane Cocking proposed that the financial report should include a "budget year to date" column to enable the Board to have a better appreciation of the cash-flow situation.

14. Ken Caldwell noted that the percentage spent on overheads is higher than expected at this point of the year while programme expenditure is lower than expected. Nick explained that this discrepancy was largely due to the figure for losses on currency exchanges (caused by the decline of the US\$), and by unexpected redundancy costs. In addition, the programme/overheads distinction makes little sense in HAP. The main point is that financial management has continued to be prudent.

*Action (ii): The Secretariat to consider revision of the current financial report format (i.e. to include budget year-to-date column and income information).*

#### **2007-2008 Workplan & 2007-2008 Expenditure and Revenue Budget**

15. 2007-2008 Workplan and Budget approved with minor modifications.

Comments and questions from the Board:

- Concern raised on the small advocacy budget. It was noted that 25% to 30% of Nick's time is dedicated to but not budgeted as advocacy. The Communications Manager will greatly increase HAP's advocacy capacity.
- Communication (newsletters & briefings) budget could be increased: as an example would be useful example to have rapid handouts/easy accessible readable information available for beneficiaries in remote areas.

- Secretariat translation budget seems a bit low. It was noted that translation costs for the Standard are included under that budget line.
- HAP Revenue Budget 2007-2008: difference between targeted and requested? targeted – not yet asked for. Requested means already applied for. Situation looks fairly positive. Nick however noted possible cash flow problems around April (with grant payments very often taking place later in the year). Jane Cocking suggested that special contributions could fill the gap.

**Action (iii): The Secretariat to ask Oxfam, Save the Children and CARE for special contributions earmarked for the contingency/reserve fund as a contribution to assist in dealing with cash-flow problems**

- Is there a strategy to approach corporations? Nick answered that HAP already has too many donors from a management point of view. The original funding strategy was that each member would raise funds for HAP but this did not work and the Secretariat took on the burden instead. It would now be better to seek larger contributions from fewer donors, although it was noted that the diversity of funding sources is also healthy.
- Certification/Accreditation: ISO Standard, need to clarify that ISO certification referred to in the budget is for the HAP Secretariat.
- Advocacy: the importance for HAP to have a very clear strategy with targets was raised and the necessity to communicate on to members so they can adhere to it and push it. Nick agreed but noted that this will only be possible once the Standard will be finalised and approved.

### **3 November 2006**

#### **The HAP Standard – 1<sup>st</sup> Public Draft**

16. Sheryl Haw presented the standard development process. The final revision of the Standard should be finalised around mid-December. Three trials are planned between November-December with Mercy Malaysia, OFADEC and DRC. Three certifications are planned to take place before the April 2007 General Assembly.

Discussion - comments and feedback from the Board:

17. Ken Caldwell – Save the Children UK  
How is accountability to marginalised groups ensured in the HAP Standard?  
*Answer: Benchmark 3 requires a full beneficiary analysis (mapping) and that representation is for all groups identified. It also ensures that information needs are considered to cover all groups.*  
Concern expressed on an increased paper trail burden – could this be kept to a minimum?  
*Answer: As far as possible the good practice section will support the use of the existing reporting methods, such as the survey/needs assessment document being used to capture feedback from beneficiaries regarding project design. All reasonable steps will be made to prevent a new/parallel paper trail being required. However, the credibility of an audit will need to have a certain amount of paper examined and verification of implementation carried out.*
18. Harsh Mander – Independent Board member  
Will the search for consensus reduce the Standard to its lowest common denominator and thus render the accountability aspect negligible? Should the Standard not outline specific minimum reporting requirements, e.g. summary financial report? What happens when salaries are inserted into programme expenses?  
*Answer: The mechanism that each agency uses to manage its finances would be captured in their accountability framework. Thus reporting and breakdown of expenses would be as per internal and external regulations.*  
*Listing what is expected in applicable programme planning and reporting will be further discussed in the finalisation of the requirements and means of verification.*

“Seeking informed consent” – what happens if beneficiaries refuse to give their consent?  
*Answer: Benchmark 3 states that the agency must show how the response from beneficiaries impacts their project design and implementation. Thus their refusal would be recorded. Although there may be times where the project continues (i.e. an immunisation campaign may be essential, but unpopular).*

Beneficiary representatives – concern raised that they are truly representative and does the benchmark ensure this?

*Answer: The requirement states that the community should appoint the representatives who should reflect the groups identified in the community. This would entail all marginalised groups too (see beneficiary analysis explanation).*

Staff performance appraisal – whose performance will be appraised, by whom?

*Answer: The agency will need to demonstrate that they are appraising all their staff. The complaints mechanism outlined in Benchmark 6 will cover the feedback from beneficiaries who may have a complaint or issue with staff performance or behaviour.*

People’s audit: Participatory audits are needed to ensure verifications accurate – are these planned?

*Answer: As far as possible verification is linked to both a paper audit and an implementation verification which will include interviews with beneficiaries. The scale this can be done will inevitably be linked to cost implications.*

19. Jane Cocking – Oxfam

Process concern – proliferation of reporting required to meet the Standard – can this be minimised.

*Answer: as above.*

The word “applicable” is still too ambiguous. Concern raised when reporting may increase security risks especially where local governments may be use material adversely. Thus we need clarity as to what “applicable” means.

*Answer: Review of wording and clearer expectations to be built into this benchmark.*

“The Covenant”: Simplification of the language needed. Concern was also raised about the word “covenant” and unspecified worries about the hierarchy of principles.

*Answer: If there is a better word than “covenant” it could be changed. This section is designed for two purposes: 1) Qualifying criteria for which organisations can be considered for certification. 2) To provide a tool to aid in making and justifying decisions in a coherent and consistent manner, where circumstances beyond the control of the agency prevent it from meeting optimum quality standards.*

*Note:* Revision of this section as not yet been done, so points and concerns are noted.

20. Antonio Donini – Independent Board member

Participation with beneficiaries, a real concern. With the professionalisation and institutionalisation of the sector it is important to ensure we do not alienate beneficiaries.

*Answer: Benchmark 4 aims to protect beneficiaries / host communities from being alienated. Please send the ECBII How to Guide – so we can see how it fits into the HAP Good Practice section.*

21. John Farmer – Medair

Where does Medair stand with its ISO certification?

The word “applicable” is concerning.

Bureaucratic load – concern raised as to how the meeting of the Standard could increase bureaucratic load for the field.

Concern with the terminology used in the “Covenant”.

*Answer: Points 2 & 4: already dealt with above. Discussion as to how ISO impacts the HAP Accountability Standard will need further discussion.*

21. Denis Caillaux – Care International

Language needs to be simplified.

Shared some feedback received for formal approval of the Standard by the Board before it goes out for publication (in the sense for the Board to commit to it and support it).

**Action (vi): Sheryl to send the ECBII How to Guide to all members.**

*Action (v) Members of the Board to be invited to participate in the ESC meeting to be held in Geneva 14-15 December 2006 (consultations on the final version of the Standard)*

*Action (vi) Sheryl to send members all relevant information in regard to the meeting.*

*Action (vii) Standard being currently revised following field trials; to be circulated as soon as revisions finalised; final version to be signed off by the Board mid-December before its publication.*

*Action (viii) Secretariat to arrange for Board consultation shortly after the ESC meeting to allow formal approval or "blessing off" by the Board.*

### **Timetable for next steps in certification trials, publication etc.**

22. Powerpoint presentation made by Sheryl.
23. Discussions around the establishment of the Certification Review Board.
  - Need to define who will sit on this Board with a particular attention about potential conflict of interests (criteria still to be defined).
  - The Chair noted that the Certification Review Board is different from both the HAP Board and HAP Secretariat.
  - Nick pointed out the usefulness of HAP's existing conflict of interest policy, and that this would apply to the Independent Accredited Auditors too.
  - Jane Cocking asked how many of Auditors are needed and how to diversify the pool?
  - Sheryl explained that two options are being considered : 1) ISO auditors to be trained in humanitarian area; 2) people with solid humanitarian background to be trained in certification (this second option is more likely).

*Action (ix) Secretariat to circulate proposal for the Certification Review Board for consultation and approval in order that certification can be started in time for the General Assembly in April 2007*

### **HAP membership services**

24. Presentation made by Sheryl on behalf of Zia (HAP Member Services Coordinator) starting with a summary of the 2005-06 activities and the plans for 2007, main activities being:
  - Raising awareness of accountability deficit and HAP's proposed solution
  - Supporting partnership to comply with the HAP Standard
  - Supporting partners to develop accountability responses in New Emergencies).

*Action (x): Sheryl to circulate presentation.*

### **Future accreditation options**

25. Question raised by Denis regarding the position of agency's partners when the agency goes through certification. Are the partners certified as well as they in some respects go through the process too (together with the agency)? Am I accountable if I (as an agency) develop partnerships with organisations I know nothing about that may not be accountable? May challenge the nature of the partnership. Sheryl answered that for verification purposes a number of partners will need to be interviewed but this doesn't mean that they are certified as well.

26. Andrew Lawday made a presentation on the promotion issues which comprise three parts or three things to market:
  - the Standard and its 7 benchmarks
  - the Manual and how to implement it
  - the Certification scheme.

Main activities for the Communications Manager in the next few month include: explaining the Standard to stakeholders so they are aware what the Standard means by end 2007; provide a manual for operational managers so they get guidance to apply the HAP Standard (deadline April 2007); help

selected members toward certification (3 agencies achieve certification by April 2007). Big email campaign around Manual planned and event in April 2007 to really launch it.

*Action: (xi) Suggestions on HAP certification logo to be sent to HAP Secretariat. Members encouraged to get design/marketing colleagues professional advice*

*Action (xii) In the framework of the promotion of the HAP Standard, Manual & Certification, Denis proposed a meeting of all member agency's communications managers to informing and solicit support for the HAP accountability/certification campaign.*

*Action (xiii) Sheryl and Andrew to send their presentations to members.*

### **Feedback on Format of HAP 2005 Accountability Report**

27. Overall positive feedback. People appreciated shape, size and content of the report, and that the report was not only a HAP Annual Report but a document offering a broad overview on the current practice of accountability in the sector. Denis raised the idea that each year a challenging policy issue could be inserted in the report. Ken Caldwell in favour of that but we need to be clear about priority audiences (are policy makers the target audience?).

*Action (xiv): Members to suggest issues for inclusion in the Annual Report.*

### **Date of 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Board meetings:**

28. 10<sup>th</sup> Board meeting: 26-27 April 2007 (Note: Annual General Assembly: 25-26 April 2007)  
11<sup>th</sup> Board meeting: 25-26 October 2007

Jane Cocking brought up the idea that the next Board October meeting could possibly take place elsewhere. Nick pointed out that General Assembly meetings must be held in Switzerland, but this does not apply to the Board meeting

*Action (xv): Any member agency interested in hosting the 11<sup>th</sup> Board meeting in October 2007 shall inform the HAP Secretariat.*

Denis concluded by thanking the HAP team for all the hard work and the enormous steps made

Nick thanked Denis and staff for their hospitality.

The meeting was adjourned

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## **Executive Director's Report to the Board**

**April to October 2006:**

### **Workplan Reference**

## **1. Building our Programme**

### **1.1 Research**

- Draft research strategy agreed (as per strategic plan)
- Research Coordinator appointed (Jennifer Birdsall)
- Beneficiaries and field practitioner survey conducted
- Field tests on draft Standard indicators conducted in Senegal, Somalia and Sri Lanka
- Feedback on draft Standard analysed

### **1.2 Standard Development Project**

- Published draft HAP Standard on the web
- Held consultation meetings on the HAP Standard in Nairobi and Dhaka
- Convened special meeting in London held to discuss issue of how to adapt the standard to those members working with "implementing partners"
- Conducted field tests on draft Standard in Senegal, Somalia and Sri Lanka
- Good Practice section of Manual being drafted
- Continued to work closely with ECB2 on the "Good Enough Guide".

### **1.3 New Emergencies Policy**

- Closed Aceh (Oxfam hosted) project
- Pakistan and Sudan projects reviewed.
- Invoked New Emergencies Protocol after release of SCF Liberia report. Agreed to send in a joint HAP/ICVA audit/support mission – ToRs agreed - so far failed to sort out timing and staffing
- Took no action on Lebanon (was this a mistake?)

### **1.4 Accreditation/certification**

- Certification trials agreed with three members (DRC, Ofadec and Mercy Malaysia)
- Accreditation options paper in preparation for April 2007 Board/GA
- Certification audit guidelines being prepared (Olivier Tayar – consultant hired)

## **2. Developing our organisation**

### **2.1 Accountability Workplans**

- Advice provided to new members
- Workplans overdue from NRC, Cafod and Medical Aid for Palestinians.
- SCF UK, Mercy Malaysia workplans due in November 2006
- Christian Aid workplan due in April 2007

### **2.2 Complaints Handling**

- Review of complaints handling policy deferred to 2007
- No complaints received

### **2.3 Growth of Membership:**

- New members: Christian Aid UK (full) and Mango UK (associate) approved.
- Accountability Event held in Dublin well attended by majority of Irish NGOs.
- Ran accountability session with senior management team of Concern
- Formal expressions of interest received from 3 US agencies

## **2.4 Advocacy**

- Published HAP 2005 Accountability Report – 2005 (600 hard copies distributed and 808 downloads)
- Took part in DFID consultation on the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative in Geneva.
- Conducted workshop with One World Trust and Action-Aid on beneficiary participation and accountability (1.2 on workplan)
- Presented paper at MSF UK debate on “Whose standards are they”
- Presented evidence to the UK Parliamentary Committee on International Development enquiry on the Tsunami response. Report supports HAP’s call for greater accountability to beneficiaries.
- Participated in the Fritz Institute’s 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting on quality and accountability
- Invited to be Member of advisory committee on the “Clinton Initiative”. Participated in two meetings and commented upon numerous drafts of papers prepared for the “Clinton Initiative” – final report recommends increased support for accountability to beneficiaries with specific reference to HAP.
- Attended the Europe consultation on International Disaster Response Law held in Turkey. Surprised by lack of engagement of major NGOs.
- Made a presentation on accountability and HAP to the SIDA Advanced Training Course in Humanitarian Action (ATHA).
- Participated in the BOND meeting on accountability
- Presented quality and accountability trends paper to Inter Agency Working Group

## **2.5 Strategic development**

- 2007-2009 Medium Term Strategic Plan revised after April Board meeting
- Proposals for new membership arrangements to be submitted to Board/GA in April 2007
- Attended Quality and Accountability Initiatives Meeting at ALNAP
  - Agreed to a joint study to assess potential for further collaboration
  - Special meeting planned for 30 January 2007
- Member of ALNAP Advisory Panel on (abandoned) Participation Study
- Held discussions with ICVA concerning transfer of Building Safer Organisations (complaints investigation capacity building project) to HAP.
- Agreed to visit ACFID in early 2007 for further strategic development discussions

## **2.6 Communications/Website development**

- Communications Manager appointed postponed. Andrew Lawday hired for 10 days per month as communication advisor
- Major updating of the content of the website carried out. French pages now being developed using intern translator

## **2.7 Fund-raising and donor reporting**

- Budget revised in line with strategic plan
- Donor reporting requirements all met (mainly through the Annual Report)

## **2.8 Management:**

- Zia Choudhury now relocated to SCF UK London Office.
- Appointment of administrative assistant deferred