

The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership

"making humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries"

2nd BOARD MEETING MINUTES

FRIDAY 11 June 2004

Maison de l'Environnement II

Chair: Denis Caillaux, Care International

Board Members: Ton van Zutphen (World Vision), Ellen Jorgensen (Women's Commission), Maurice Herson (Oxfam), Andreas Kamm (DRC), Mamadou Ndiaye (OFADEC), Ellen Sirleaf Johnson (independent)

Staff: Nicholas Stockton, Noria Mezlef, Maximilien Zimmermann.

I – WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Apologies from Igballe Rogova (Kosova Women's Network), unable to attend due to illness
Apologies from Soren Jessen-Petersen, unable to attend due to another commitment
Welcome to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, attending her first board meeting

The minutes of December 2003 Board meeting were approved
Proposed agenda adopted without change

II – UPDATE ON ACTIONS AND DECISIONS

No comments regarding decisions from December meeting

III – DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Induction

- Handover with Agnes completed in mid February.
- Met many peers and colleagues in Geneva
- Induction still ongoing

Staff

- Zia Choudhury, Accountability Advisor, joined at the end of March
- Agreed unpaid leave of absence for Maximilien to work in Senegal for 6 months

Members

- Visited CARE International and TearFund to help with their Accountability workplans
- Received visits from Women's Commission, OFADEC, Oxfam and CARE
- Attended World Vision's Humanitarian Forum in Berlin and led discussion group on accountability

Prospective members

- Held discussions with Action-Aid UK, Disaster Mitigation Initiative (India), SCF UK, Medical Aid for Palestine (UK), MSF Holland

Networks

- Presented update on HAP-I to Emergency Directors Network in Berlin

- Kathrin Schick, Director of VOICE visited HAP-I office in Geneva
- Attended the ICVA Board meeting and presented an update on HAP-I
- Attended InterAction Forum in Washington, invited to present two papers, on security and an update on HAP-I
- Had informal bilateral meeting with Joel Mclellan of SCHR

Quality and Accountability Initiatives

- Attended Sphere, Reach Out and HAPI-I meeting in Geneva
- Had a bilateral meeting in Oxford with John Mitchell of ALNAP
- Had discussions with Maurice in his capacity as chair of the ALNAP Working Group on Consultation and Participation
- Noria attended the ALNAP Working Group on research methods
- Held consultation with Transparency International in Berlin
- Interviewed by Randolph Kent as part of DFID's HDC evaluation
- Participated in future of Sphere consultation and was also interviewed as a founding member
- Had bilateral meeting with Sphere Project Management Chairperson Lola Gostelow
- Gregory Ormsby (former Cambodia field trial coordinator) attended HANET meeting in Cambodia on our behalf
- Asked to be on reference group of the study to evaluate the impact of the Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Rwanda Crisis. Attended weekend meeting in the UK.
- Attended QUAIN meeting in London

Programme

- Held a small planning workshop attended by Sara Davidson and Tahmina Rahman to discuss the idea of developing accountability standards
- Held two Work-Plan review sessions
- In discussion with DRC over Accountability Training Workshop with partners in Serbia

Miscellaneous

- Presented paper on accountability to training session for Swiss diplomats at the Geneva Centre for Security Studies
- Interviewed by Thea Hilhoorst, academic preparing conference on the Code of Conduct
- Interviewed by Anisya Thomas of the Fritz Institute on topic of measuring impact, and then invited to present paper at the Washington conference being held at the end of June
- Consulted by ECHO consultants examining security policies

Discussion: Relationship between HAP International and other initiatives (ICVA, Sphere, ALNAP...). Denis welcomed the proposal from the QUAIN Directors Meeting (Quality and Accountability Initiatives) that the Chairs of Sphere, HAP-I, ALNAP and People in Aid should meet to discuss governance and complementarity without the directors being present. The board members requested the Secretariat to continue to communicate the difference between the various initiatives. The main issue is not that these overlap but rather how we will manage these overlaps. The re-branding of HAP-I is necessary; the current acronym doesn't communicate who we are. We should focus on the words "partnership" and "beneficiaries". What makes HAP-I unique is the commitment to set up an accreditation system (objective 4 of the Statutes), even though the details of how we should do this, continues to be debated.

Decision: *To organize a meeting with the Chairs of Sphere, ALNAP, People in Aid*

IV – HAP INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE

Discussion: Beneficiary Representative: still short of one independent “beneficiary” board member. So far the members have failed to identify potential independent board members who comply with the required qualifications.

Oxfam: Jasmine Whitbread will replace Maurice Herson as a board member. While regretting Maurice’s departure, the Board welcomed Oxfam’s decision to nominate their International Director as the Board member.

CAFOD: has “informally” informed HAP-I that it will not join the partnership at this time. As a consequence Denis advised CAFOD that it would be inappropriate for Matthew Carter to attend the board meeting.

Three seats on the board are now vacant, two for full members and one for an independent member.

Complaints Committee. At the December 2003 Board meeting CAFOD had agreed to be an “alternate member” of the Complaints Committee. In view of its decision to not join HAP-I, CAFOD needs to be replaced by another member.

Decisions: *1. Full members to send nominations for the Independent board member vacancy to the Chair and the Executive Director. If at the next meeting the members do not come up with possible candidates, we may have to consider changing the qualification criteria.*
2. The Chair will write to Oxfam to acknowledge the change of their board member and will also inform all full members about the change, noting that full members have the right to call for a vote if they object to this change.
3. For the time being the Complaints Committee will have only one alternate

V – HAP INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Decisions: *1. Membership of World Vision International, Oxfam GB, Women’s Commission on Refugees and Children were confirmed as full members. DANIDA and DFID confirmed as associate members.*
2. The Board agreed that the priority of the Secretariat is not to seek new members for the time being, but rather to consolidate the organisation around the existing membership.
3. The Step by Step membership process was approved. Secretariat recommendations should be circulated to all board members. Full documents to be made available on request to the three members appointed by the Chair to review applications.

VI – UPDATE MEMBER WORKPLAN PROCESS

Update from Board Members on the development of their accountability workplans:

Oxfam: Oxfam did not follow the recommended process in its entirety, as this would have taken more than 3 months to complete. A questionnaire concerning current capacity and practice was sent to various staff to gain a broad picture of the organization. It was a useful exercise that indicates the scale of the task over the course of the next two years.

OFADEC: started discussion in January, will work in Dakar with urban refugees, and in the north with refugees. Currently drafting the workplan. Looked at the mission statement, already have a person appointed as a focal point for receiving complaints. Also working on a code of conduct, using Red Cross, UNHCR and our network CoC. Will set up meeting with beneficiaries at the beginning and completion of programmes. Intend to submit the workplan to HAP-I soon.

DRC: Focusing on 4 areas: beneficiaries participation, complaint system, getting implementing partners on board, and training implementing partners. Plan should be ready within a week.

Care International: was expecting to deliver result quickly. The process was good but plan not yet ready for submission. Want to have a regional approach to the workplan, which makes it more difficult. Very enthusiastic response from the field. Would like to have a dedicated support from the Secretariat. Cambodia, Indonesia and Afghanistan are focus countries. In Africa hope to use Darfur crisis to assist in better defining accountability, the workplan will also cover Latin America.

WVI: Did not follow the recommended process. Wanted to keep to the deadline. The draft workplan is just two pages, 2 to 3 people were involved with a further 25 from different levels who know about HAP-I and willing to support. The workplan is not overly ambitious, with 3 or 4 countries leading because their staff are already supportive. New Humanitarian learning and accountability position at WV shows the organisational commitment. WV would welcome an accountability workplan review. Would also welcome a common approach in Chechnya where three full members are present.

Women's Commission: had a draft meeting with everybody involved at the WC, enthusiasm was enormous. It is pretty basic with training of staff about existing standards and developing WC's standards, setting up mechanism for monitoring and evaluation.

Nick pointed out that the development of the workplan should not be a stand-alone exercise but an integrated process. There is a cost to it in terms of time and effort. The business case of accountability has not been yet demonstrated and if we can do this, organisations are more likely to move to full compliance

The Secretariat has also received the Medair workplan. The NRC and Tearfund workplan are being developed

VII – HAP INTERNATIONAL REVISED WORKPLAN

Nick presented the revised workplan, noting that it was now on 3 sides compared to the 17 sides of the first workplan.

Discussion regarding the objectives:

Objective 1.2: "to develop actionable and verifiable HAP-I standards" (see proposal for "Manual on Accountability to Humanitarian Beneficiaries"

Board members expressed their concerns over possible confusion about the meaning and content of standards and indicators. Nick stressed that the "manual for accountability to humanitarian beneficiaries " will be based upon an optimum degree of collective effort with the establishment of a reference group composed with staff from the field and HQ of various organizations (members and non-members).

Objective 1.4: "to ensure that HAP-I members implement coordinated accountability practices in new crises" (see proposed "New Emergencies Policy" paper)

The Board stressed the importance and necessity for the members to work together in the field and agreed that it would give a bad impression if the Partnership does not adopt a common approach, for example in Darfur.

Objective 2.1: "to develop and implement a membership accreditation system".

Some Board members expressed their concerns regarding the introduction of an accreditation procedure; the fears behind the word accreditation and the risk of being seen as being accredited by the donors (associated members of the Partnership). Nick reaffirmed that the HAP-I Statutes (Article 5 point 4) place an obligation upon us to establish an accreditation system. In the view of the Secretariat accreditation should be based upon a process of peer review that confirms that members are achieving a "reasonable degree of compliance" with the HAP Accountability Principles. This seems to imply a two stage process of membership. The first phase would be

“probationary”, during which the new member implemented its accountability workplan, designed to achieve a reasonable level of compliance, say, over a 2 year period. Following this, a peer review exercise would examine the agency’s performance against the Accountability Principles and then, if justified, “accredit” the member accordingly.

This basic proposition stimulated considerable debate. It was pointed out that the guidelines for the Accountability Workplan do not stipulate that full compliance should be achieved within a two year period. It was noted that at the rate of 2 peer reviews per year (as proposed in the workplan), it would take a minimum of 5 years to complete the accreditation process even with the existing members. This would be unacceptably slow. Further more, a two-stage process of membership could be confusing and easily misunderstood. It was also unclear how the proposed accreditation process fitted with “the staircase” approach.

There was general agreement that the accreditation process should be restricted to members, and that ultimately the credibility of HAP-I is linked to genuine improvements in the effectiveness and transparency of its members. The Secretariat explained that it hoped to develop a set of verifiable and actionable indicators of compliance with the HAP Accountability principles as part of the exercise to produce the HAP-I Accountability Manual. Nick emphasised his view that it is essential that we develop a common understanding of the obligations of HAP-I membership and use the accreditation process to confirm that members are achieving a reasonable degree of compliance with these.

Decision: *The Board requested the Secretariat to prepare a paper on the proposed Accreditation system, for discussion either at the September or the December Board meeting.*

Objective 2.6: Fund raising and donors reporting” (see “Fundraising and membership Fees- a new strategy”)

The Board members agreed that self-reliance cannot be achieved and that membership fees should be decreased for next year, fees to be recalculated on an annual basis. The proposed decrease of 74% was seen to be too high by some board members.

Decisions: *1. The Board endorsed the revised workplan.*

2. Regarding objective 2.1, the Board asked the Secretariat to present a paper explaining the proposed accreditation system at the next Board meeting.

3. Secretariat to produce draft budget for 2005-2006 based on revised workplan

4. Nominated fund-raising agencies complete initial donor “soundings” and report findings to Secretariat

5. Secretariat to send revised budget and funding plan to Board for comments (July)

VIII – FINANCIAL REPORTING

Update on HAP- I financial situation. The approved original budget for 2003-2004 of CHF2’381’812 is over-estimated. According to the 2003 expenditures (to be approved at the next General Assembly) and current expenditures, a budget of around CHF1’600’000 CHF is more realistic. The Secretariat will ensure that costs at the end of 2004 will not exceed the expected income for the period 2003-2004 (CHF1’632’728).

Decisions: *1. To present 2003 account for General Assembly approval in December 2004*

2. Secretariat to present Audit TOR at next board meeting

IX – AOB

Decisions: *1. Chair and Director to send email to board members with proposed date for next board meeting. The meeting will probably be held by telephone conference call*

2. Chair and Director to propose date for General Assembly meeting in December with proposed debate on Humanitarian Neutrality.