



In the spotlight

Mark your calendars for London

The 7th semiannual membership meeting of the RHSC will take place in London on Friday and Saturday, 27 and 28 April. The membership meeting will be preceded by the Executive Committee meeting on 26 April; and the Systems Strengthening Working Group meeting on 25 April.

Our hosts for the meeting, IPPF, have secured accommodation for up to 50 attendees at the [Royal Horseguards Hotel](#). Preferential room rates, including breakfast, have been obtained for £185 (approximately US\$363) per night. The membership meeting will take place at the historic One Whitehall Place, located adjacent to the hotel. Other meetings will take place at IPPF.

Although invitations will be sent to members in late February, all those wishing to attend are strongly encouraged to inform the [Secretariat](#) of their interest and accommodation preferences as soon as possible. Affordable accommodation is at a premium in London, so the earlier the organizers can accurately estimate attendance, the better they can meet participants' needs.

RHSC on the scene

Draft Strategic Plan moves forward

In late January, members of the Strategic Planning Task Force re-assembled in Washington, DC to continue developing a three- to five-year strategic plan for the Coalition. The six-member team refined a draft narrative on the context and rationale for the Coalition. They also elaborated a strategic log frame that links goals to objectives and indicators; and that describes the unique roles of the RHSC, its partners, and the Secretariat in meeting those goals. Following a final edit in early February, the Task Force will forward its draft plan to the Secretariat, so that the latter can, in turn, facilitate a consultative process with the Executive Committee and Working Groups. Following revisions and input, hopes are that the plan can be submitted to the Executive Committee for final approval by the end of March, with final dissemination to the membership in late April.

Organon visits RHSC Secretariat

On 15 January, Mr. Frank Roijmans, Executive Director of Organon's Institutional Affairs and Family Planning Department, visited the Secretariat. In an engaging and often thought-provoking discussion, Roijmans described Organon's contributions in Madagascar where the MOH, donors, and other service-delivery providers are introducing Implanon through the public and socially marketed sectors. Organon is also working to support a second-tier market initiative in Yemen.

Finally, Roijmans highlighted concerns affecting both the pharmaceutical sector and the development community. He discussed the importance of transparency and efficiency in commodity procurement; the role of price reductions for public-sector and socially marketed supplies; the opportunity for enhanced co-ordination at country level between the public and private sectors; and the identification of best practices. But he also highlighted areas where common expectations are less clear. What does the development community value most from the pharmaceutical sector? Is it engagement? Social commitment? Or just the cheapest price? [Let us know your thoughts!](#)

October in Washington, DC

Though still nine months away, the Secretariat is pleased to announce that the eighth semiannual membership meeting of the RHSC will take place in Washington, DC on 24 and 25 October, 2007. Hosted by USAID with the support of the Deliver Project, the meeting will take place at the [L' Enfant Plaza Hotel](#). Preferential room rates have been secured for approximately \$220 per night. The membership meeting will be preceded by an Executive Committee meeting, to be held at the offices of PAI (Population Action International) on the 23rd.

Highlights from the Working Groups

Systems Strengthening Working Group

On 23 January, eight members of the Countries at Risk (CAR) group met by teleconference to affirm their support for the group and to agree upon basic operating rules and procedures. Among the key decisions reached was an agreement that any member bringing a country to the attention of the CAR would also provide the supply data required for the group to act upon it.

At the meeting, three countries were discussed: Kenya—where UNFPA reported they had to procure and ship an emergency stock of contraceptives, while awaiting the arrival of KfW-funded commodities; Pakistan—where a future switch to basket funding by DFID may have implications for the supply of condoms for social marketing; and Tanzania—where, despite good donor collaboration and sector support for RH, USAID has found it necessary to procure contraceptive stocks until the Government can complete its own procurement processes.

Finally, CAR agreed to the establishment of a small database on country-specific stock status information. The database will incorporate data gathered at country level by the Deliver Project as well as by UNFPA's Country Commodity Manager (CCM) system, which is operational in about 90 countries. Assembly of the database would be spearheaded by the Secretariat, with the expectation that it would be taken over by one or more CAR group members.

Resource Mobilisation and Awareness (RMA) Working Group

Representatives of the RMA Working Group (WG) and the RH Interchange (RHI) met last month in Washington, DC to identify possible overlaps in countries where each will support field-based activities. The RMA has already identified the 12 countries where it will focus its efforts, while the RHI, which currently has 18 countries on its list, hopes to reduce that number to 10.

By the end of the meeting, both groups agreed that in cases of overlap, they would work together to identify and maximize potential synergies. In the short term, RHI will initiate their work in those countries (possibly four) standing no chance of overlap, while holding out on activities in countries where the possibility of overlap does exist (Ethiopia, Cambodia, Kenya, Nepal, Uganda and Zambia) until their final selection of 10 is made.

On another note, the RMA wishes to bring to the attention of the Coalition a new Ipas publication that supports the inclusion of the manual vacuum aspiration (MVA) as an essential RH commodity. The publication, which can be accessed [here](#), also provides basic guidance on MVA forecasting for health care systems.

Market Development Approaches (MDA) Working Group

On January 25, 10 members of the MDA WG met by teleconference to discuss progress on MDA initiatives. In response to continued uncertainty over the role of an MDA Country Typology Tool, the group asked the Secretariat to administer a brief questionnaire that would assess how such a tool might be used by members, its added value, etc. The questionnaire and a brief summary of the proposed typology are available [here](#).

Other topics of discussion included potential areas of collaboration with USAID-funded PSP-One Project, the preparation of a TOR/RFP to evaluate MDA tools, and the most appropriate next steps for addressing the issue of demand creation. Minutes of the MDA teleconference are

available [here](#).

Upcoming events

12-17 Feb	Submission of draft strategic plan to Executive Committee for review
28 Feb	John Skibiak to facilitate session on contraceptives and RH supplies at Technical Meeting on Sexual and RH Policies in Africa, Barcelona. For more information go to the Grupo GIE website .
15 Mar	MDA teleconference
25 Apr	Systems Strengthening WG meeting, London
26 Apr	Executive Committee meeting, London
27-28 Apr	RHSC Membership meeting, London
24-25 Oct	RHSC Membership meeting, Washington, DC

Contact

Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition

Rue Marie-Thérèse, 21
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 (0)2 210.02.22
Fax: +32 (0)2 219.33.63
Email: RHSCsecretariat@path.org
www.rhsupplies.org