

**Summaries of RHSC
Executive Committee Meetings,
London, UK**

THURSDAY April 27, 2007

Executive Committee participants: Wolfgang Bichmann (Co-chair), KfW/German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development; Margret Verwijk (Co-chair), Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Terri Bartlett, PAI; Valerie DeFilippo, IPPF; Rogelio Fernandez-Castilla, UNFPA; Sadia Chowdhury, World Bank; Scott Radloff, USAID; Susan Rich, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; John Skibiak, RHSC Secretariat;
Other participants: Alan Bornbusch, USAID; Lester Chinery, ICON; Joerg Maas, DSW; Margaret Neuse, Consultant; Sangeeta Raja, World Bank; Jagdish Upadhyay, UNFPA; Marion van Schaik, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Marian Weldin, RHSC Secretariat (Recorder).

State of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition

John Skibiak summarized the highlights of the Coalition and the Secretariat activities since the last membership meeting in October in Bonn. (Refer to the minutes of the membership meeting 27-28 April, "Since Bonn" for this summary.)

The Secretariat recently completed the first annual report to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The report included a discussion of the development process and content of the Strategic Plan. The Plan will be the cornerstone of the future work of the Coalition and provides the basis for indicators measuring accomplishments.

The three key issues that need to be addressed in the next few months are:

- Finalizing the Strategic Plan
- Resolving the issue of membership
- Planning for financial sustainability of the Coalition and Secretariat beyond September 2009, when the grant support from the Gates Foundation ends.

Appreciation was expressed to the Secretariat for all it has accomplished in the last six months, for carrying forward the work on the Strategic Plan, and for the transparency with which it was accomplished.

Review of RHSC Meeting Agenda, Desired Outcomes

John Skibiak reviewed the agenda and objectives for the 27-28 April membership meeting. Friday breakout sessions would cut across Working Groups, while Saturday breakout sessions would be along Working Groups lines. Panel presentations would focus on the changing development environment and how RH supply security committees are functioning at country level.

The Strategic Plan: The Way Forward

Margaret Neuse reviewed the steps followed to develop the Strategic Plan, including how the Task Force addressed the feedback received from the Executive Committee and the Working Groups. (See minutes of the 27-28 April membership meeting for this summary.)

Action:

In response to a request from the Strategic Planning Task Force, the Executive Committee validated the work undertaken up to this point on the Strategic Plan and authorized taking it to the next step, which was to present it to the membership for discussion and further input, specifically with regards to operationalizing objectives and indicators.

Framework for Definition of Coalition Membership

John Skibiak stated that he sees strong support to expanding Coalition membership beyond the current range of stakeholders. Some issues that need to be considered in addressing membership include linkages with the Strategic Plan, size of membership, levels of participation, management, future funding support, and the role general membership meetings.

Action

The Executive Committee agreed that a process similar to that used for development of the Strategic Plan should be used for resolving membership issues. Therefore, a task force will be formed (comprising Secretariat, one of the Co-Chairs, an external consultant, and volunteers within the Coalition) and empowered to develop a well-considered approach that they can present to the Executive Committee for consideration.

October 2007 Membership meeting: Proposal review

USAID submitted to the Executive Committee a concept paper proposing a thematic focus on Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region for the October 2007 membership meeting. The paper described discussion points and activities in which voices from the LAC region could be heard, specifically with regards to continuing challenges and lessons learned in the RH supplies arena. The Executive Committee approved USAID's proposal, noting other issues that could also potentially be addressed.

April 2008 Membership meeting: Location

USAID's invitation to host the October 2007 meeting provides a six-month lead for preparations. To sustain this advantageous position, it will be necessary to soon identify a host and venue for the April 2008 meeting, or reach agreement on whether it makes sense to move from semi-annual to annual meetings as some members have suggested.

Selection of new Chair(s) for 2008-2010

Current Co-Chairs will officially rotate off in April 2008. To ensure a six-month overlap with in-coming Chairs(s), elections for the same will take place at the October 2007 Executive Committee meeting. There was consensus that the Co-chair model has proven to be a highly effective one. It could also provide the basis for greater continuity should the tenure of the Chairs be staggered.

Participants

Executive Committee members: Margret Verwijk, Susan Rich, and John Skibiak

Other participants: Alan Bornbusch, Lester Chinery, Margaret Neuse, Jagdish Upadhyay, Carolyn Vogel, and Suzanne Ehlers

Reporter: Marian Weldin

Developing-Country Presentations

The group applauded the participation of guest visitors and commended Steve Kinzett in synthesizing their experience and keeping the presentations focused. Given the limited time availability, however, it was recommended that the feasibility of panel discussions (rather than individual presentations) be explored. Other suggestions included more time beforehand for developing-country guests to synthesize lessons for presentation in plenary; coupled with additional break-out session for guests to provide more detailed country information.

Future Meetings: Washington, DC and beyond

- Given the intensity of discussions involved in developing the agenda of each membership meeting, the idea of establishing a meeting planning committee was proposed.
- The amount of time allocated to the working groups seemed sufficient. This was partly due to the fact that they all had extra meetings before the membership meeting. A suggested format for October 2007 would be for the Working Groups and other relevant groups to plan on a one-half-day workshop before the main meeting.
- Perhaps PAI could provide an advocacy training in Washington, DC.
- It would be interesting to have some input from the U.S. Congress, perhaps on a topic such as “reproductive health supplies and political sensitivities.”
- It also would be interesting to hear about political environments in other countries, including developing countries.
- Still unresolved is whether the Coalition should have one or two meetings per year, or whether a hybrid would work—for example, one annual meeting and a range of other kinds of meetings (Executive Committee, working groups, special forums, etc.) in the interim.

Strategic Plan

Next steps in formulation of the strategic plan will be:

- Compile input from the break-out group discussions and integrate it into the draft strategic plan.

- Send the revised draft to the working groups for review and input, particularly with respect to the last three columns of the strategic framework matrix. This information will help identify specific sub-activities that currently are not reflected in the matrix.
- Within working groups, look at what the groups are doing currently that is relevant to the strategic plan's goals and objectives.
- Determine the timeframe for finalizing and disseminating the strategic plan, which will still be open to further development as the Coalition and the work plans evolve.

Membership

As requested by the Executive Committee, the Secretariat will take the lead in forming a task force to develop a membership plan.