

Organizational Principles and Structural/Governance
Terms of Reference for the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition¹
October 5, 2005

I. Introduction

1. Projections based on public-sector contraceptive supply donation and funding trends point to shortfalls in the supply of contraceptives and condoms for family planning and HIV prevention over the next two decades. These predicted shortfalls (for supplies only, exclusive of the systems needed to deliver them) are the result of increasing demand and large numbers of people entering the reproductive age group. Ensuring a continuous supply to meet the demand for contraceptives, condoms, and other reproductive health (RH) medicines and commodities necessary to address critical public health needs is a complex responsibility shared among country governments, international donors, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the private commercial sector. It is an issue not only of resources but also of their efficient and effective use.

2. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo focused on the objective of universal access to reproductive health care by 2015, including RH supplies. In 2001, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other donors initiated a “call to action” to help achieve RH supply security.² Stimulated by the call to action, participants at a May 2001 global meeting on contraceptive security, convened in Istanbul, Turkey, repeatedly called for a more effective coordination of efforts, inputs, and resources. One of the four strategic objectives arising out of the meeting was for “collective action by, among, and between implementing and funding partners guided by country, regional, and global strategic plans.”³ Specifically, participants recommended:

A revitalized donor coordination council should be supported with human and financial resources to ensure that the principal funders of supplies are working together, sharing information, and helping to solve this looming crisis.³

3. The “Arenas for Action” of the Istanbul declaration, endorsed by all participants, further recommended concerted activity among donors who support commodity programs through supplies and logistics assistance:

Donors can best help countries address their needs by flexible and simplified procedures to maximize the benefit and timeliness of their assistance, at minimal cost. Building on existing mechanisms

¹ These Terms of Reference draw heavily from the following resources:

- GAVI website: www.vaccinealliance.org.
- StopTB Partnership website: www.stoptb.org.
- Roll Back Malaria Partnership website: www.rbm.who.int/cgi-bin/rbm/rbmportal/custom/rbm/home.do.
- Caines K, et al. *Independent Evaluation of the Global Stop TB Partnership*. London: Institute for Health Sector Development; 2003. Available at: www.ihsd.org.
- McKinsey and Company. *Developing Successful Global Health Alliances*. Seattle, WA: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; 2002.
- Druce N, Harmer A. *The Determinants of Effectiveness: Partnerships That Deliver Review of the GHP and 'Business' Literature*. London: DFID Health Resource Centre; 2004. GHP Study Paper 6. Available at: www.dfidhealthrc.org/shared/know_the/publications.html.
- GAVI. *Strengthening GAVI Governance Processes and Structures in the Context of Convergence: 2004 Governance Review Final Report*. Abuja, Nigeria: GAVI; 2004.
- www.vaccinealliance.org/resources/14brd_abuja_governance_report.pdf.
- Caines K, et al. *Assessing the Impact of Global Health Partnerships*. London: DFID Health Resource Centre; 2004. Available at: www.dfidhealthrc.org/shared/know_the/publications.html#gghp.
- Malaria Consortium. *Final Report of the External Evaluation of Roll Back Malaria*. Liverpool. August 2002. Available at: www.igh.ucsf.edu/publications/roll_back_malaria.pdf.

² www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/135_filename_rhcstrategy.pdf.

³ Population Action International. *Meeting the Reproductive Challenge: Securing Contraceptives and Condoms for HIV/AIDS Prevention*. Washington, DC: PAI; 2001. Meeting report.

*countries should take the lead in coordinating donor efforts. Donors should strive for greater consistency and coherence in their policies and practices.*³

4. Major donors of RH supplies currently would benefit from an enhanced mechanism to maximize coordination, problem solving, and strategic planning necessary to ensure complementarity of assistance related to critical RH supplies. The UNFPA Global Initiative on Reproductive Health Commodity Management⁴ for many years hosted a forum on contraceptive commodity management that enabled information exchange among major commodity donors and key NGOs. The more recent Task Team on Reproductive Health Commodities, charged with examining the feasibility and structure of an RH supplies fund or facility, also serves as a model of constructive exchange and progress toward an agreed-upon goal within a collegial atmosphere. The Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC) builds directly on the foundation of the Task Team.

II. Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC)

Background

5. At a January 9, 2004, meeting, Task Team members informally identified a number of positive outcomes related to their participation over the previous year. These included an ongoing, heightened awareness of RH supply issues that, in some cases, transcended individual Task Team members and was absorbed by their respective organizations; the fostering of a collaborative spirit and trust among participants; and the sharing of information, views, and work plans to help maximize the impact of work effort and avoid unnecessary duplication. All Task Team members at the January meeting also expressed interest in participating in the development of an ongoing mechanism to retain and expand the positive elements of the Task Team. The following sections lay out a structural terms of reference for such a mechanism.

RHSC Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles, Goals and Objectives

6. The RHSC's **vision** is to protect people's health and improve livelihoods by ensuring sustained access to a choice of quality RH supplies.

7. The RHSC's **mission** is to ensure that every person is able to obtain and use RH supplies.

8. As **guiding principles** the RHSC commits itself to achieving a sustained supply of affordable, quality reproductive health supplies in low- and middle-income countries. To this end, the RHSC:

- Understands that achieving its vision requires: (i) public and private resources to optimally serve people's needs for RH supplies, especially needs of the poorest; and (ii) utilizing a multi-stakeholder approach to improve RH behaviors. RHSC's membership includes multilateral organizations, bilateral and private foundation donors, low- and moderate-income country governments, civil society, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs, and the private sector.
- Acknowledges that to be effective the Coalition must complement the actions of its individual members; it will therefore (i) concentrate on areas where no one partner can work effectively alone to leverage their different comparative strengths; (ii) commit to strengthening harmonization and coordination of partner activities; (iii) implement a cooperative, problem-solving approach for developing solutions; (iv) works by consensus toward common goals.
- Believes that increased country ownership is fundamental for reproductive health supplies; therefore, it will work through national governments to develop supportive policies, plans, resource commitments, and capacities.

⁴ <http://www.unfpa.org/about/report/report98/eff1.htm>.

- Recognizes the role of both industrialized and developing-country manufacturers for planning, providing, and delivering quality RH supplies.

9. To achieve its mission, the Coalition's **goals** are to:

- Improve access to and choice of RH supplies for low- and moderate-income consumers through public, private, and commercial sectors.
- Increase political commitment and financial resources and their more effective use to serve the RH needs of poor and vulnerable populations.
- Strengthen global, regional, and country systems for reliable and predictable supply of quality RH supplies.
- Improve coordination and use of global-, regional-, and country-level information, knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned.
- Formulate other strategic responses as needed to address the future demand for RH supplies.

10. Interest in developing an ongoing and effective RHSC for collaborative strategic thinking and action, joint problem solving, and information sharing is rooted in a set of key assumptions and principles:

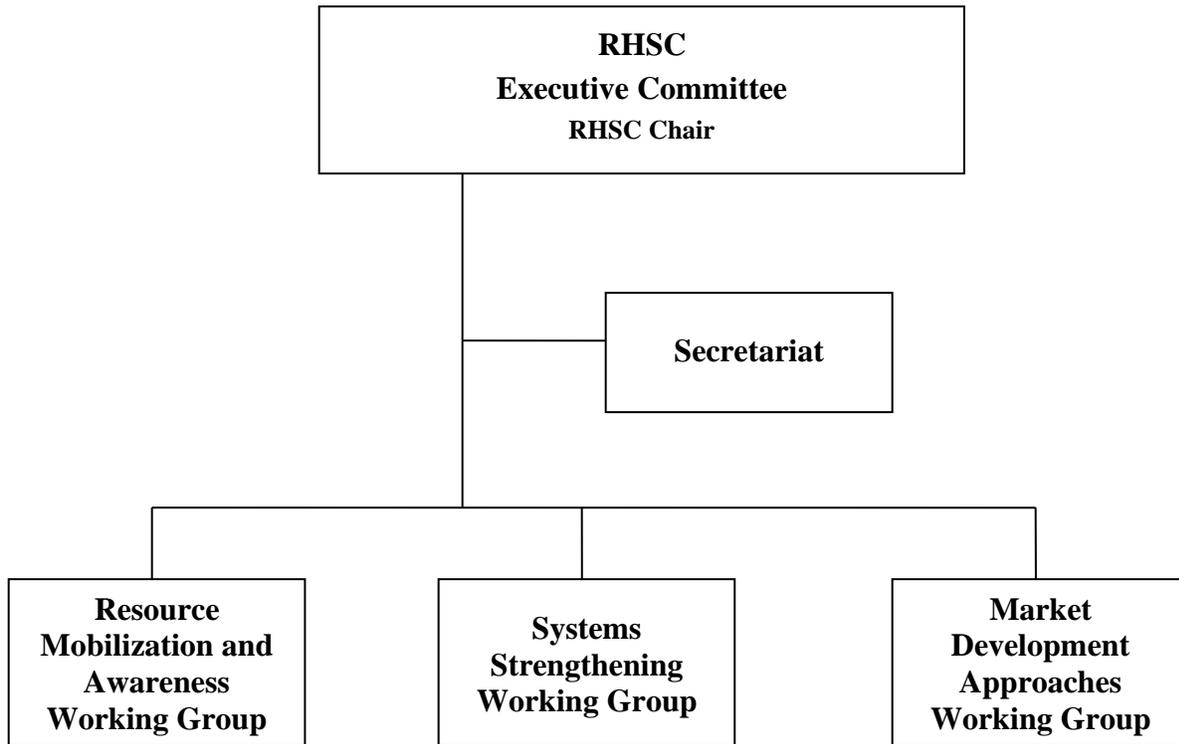
- The RHSC is based upon a foundation of shared trust and joint commitment to RH supply security at the country level.
- Member organizations bring different strengths and comparative advantages to the table; this diversity provides the basis for collaboration to advance efforts across organizations.
- Member organizations recognize the importance and value of sharing organizational priorities and perspectives on RH commodities.
- Members recognize that to gain value from the RHSC they must participate in the development of useful meeting content and discussion and be willing to commit the resources necessary to work together on follow-up activities. Within each member organization, senior staff are actively supportive of the RHSC and committed to the joint work initiated through the RHSC. Member representatives come to meetings fully briefed and prepared, are able to speak for their organizations on agenda topics, and can commit to short- and immediate-term activities undertaken by the RHSC as a whole or by one or more RHSC organizations.
- Member organizations support their own participation through commitment and energy, and with their own funds; and member organizations commit resources (financial, staff, and technical) to achieve RHSC objectives, including resources necessary to support a coordinating secretariat.
- On a regular basis, and initially after the first year, RHSC members will conduct or commission a critical review to assess the value of the RHSC. Based on this assessment, the RHSC will decide whether to continue and if adjustments in scope and/or operations are necessary.

11. The value the RHSC brings includes:

- Opportunities for maximized impact with limited resources.
- Strengthened advocacy through shared objectives and messages.
- Strengthened development of new markets (2nd Tier).
- Increased influence at the country level through a united effort.
- Increased harmonization to avoid duplication.
- Existence of a neutral forum for technical collaboration in a politically charged environment.

- Communication, collaboration, and coordination as a means of a more efficient and effective use of existing resources.
- Progress toward unified approaches devolving from disparate systems.
- Development of tools and approaches within a joint advisory and accountability mechanism.

RHSC Structure⁵



⁵ The RHSC Chair, Executive Committee, or working groups may convene task forces for ad hoc tasks or activities that do not require direct and continuous RHSC engagement. Participation in task forces is voluntary and the task force is accountable to the convener.

III. RHSC Operations

Functions of the RHSC⁶

12. Comprising representatives of organizations and constituencies with a significant (programmatic and/or financial) stake in RH supply security, the RHSC provides a forum for members: (i) to share information, publications, data, and research findings to advance RHSC strategic priorities; (ii) to constructively raise, discuss, and seek resolution to problems that impede progress toward RH supply security at the country level; and (iii) to formulate a set of strategic priorities and work in concert to achieve them through agreed-upon activities, the implementation of which is member-sponsored through financial, in-kind, and technical commitments.

13. In overseeing the work of the Coalition, the RHSC will endeavor: (i) to be participant driven in its strategy, implementation, and governance; (ii) to be committed to working collaboratively and effectively to use new and existing resources and expertise to resolve supply problems and ensure long-term RH supply; (iii) to foster and strengthen, as appropriate, broader constituency participation in activities designed to secure the strategic objectives of the RHSC; and (iv) to objectively measure the success of the alliance as well as of its specific activities.

Membership

14. Composition of the RHSC. RHSC membership is drawn from key sectors engaged in the "total market" for contraceptive and other RH supplies. RHSC membership criteria include: (i) commitment to and financial investment in RH (currently with a contraceptive emphasis) supply security; and (ii) capacity to contribute to the RHSC objectives through relevant skill, experience, or access to resources.

15. Members participate on both a renewable and rotating basis. Rotating members serve two-year terms, but may renew their participation with approval of the full RHSC membership. Current Members include:

Low-/Middle-Income Country Governments⁷

- Africa region
- Asia region (two members)
- Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- Latin America and Caribbean region

Multilateral Organizations

- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- World Health Organization (WHO)/Essential Drugs Management Unit
- The World Bank

Donors

- European Commission
- Germany/BMZ/KfW Development Bank
- Netherlands/Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- United Kingdom/Department for International Development (DFID)
- United States/Agency for International Development (USAID)

Private Donors

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

⁶ As needed and as resources allow, the RHSC may undertake to host a broader RH supplies community forum. The forum would be an open participation assembly. The forum would serve to:

- Identify problems and new challenges in attaining RH supply security.
- Serve as a mechanism for exchanging experiences and best practices.
- Consolidate and increase community members' commitment to the objectives of the RHSC.
- Identify and create opportunities for advocacy, communications activities, and social mobilization.
- Advance the RHSC strategic plan.

⁷ Two-year term.

- United Nations Foundation
 - A private foundation representing other foundations with interest in RH supply security⁸
- Nongovernmental Organizations
- International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)
 - Partners in Population and Development (PPD)
 - An NGO from a low/middle-income country⁹
 - Supply Initiative (SI)¹⁰
- Social Marketing Organizations (SMOs)¹¹
- An SMO from a low-/middle-income country
 - An SMO with international reach

16. Member selection and tenure. The Executive Committee recommends for RHSC approval, new members to replace those rotating out of the RHSC. The developing-country members will include representation of a range of economic levels and a range of levels of RH self-sufficiency. In addition, the Executive Committee may recommend for RHSC approval, adjustments in membership as circumstances and priorities dictate. Current RHSC members may recommend new members to the Executive Committee.

17. RHSC visiting participants. RHSC members may recommend representatives of developing countries, donors (private and governmental), technical organizations, NGOs, or other institutions such as commercial manufacturers or distributors, to participate in RHSC meetings on a temporary basis. Visiting participants bring needed expertise to discussions and may advance specific issues or agenda items. Temporary participation of these experts may be limited to one meeting or may extend over several meetings depending on their contribution and RHSC needs.

18. RHSC members forward names, expertise, and anticipated length of participation of recommended visiting participants, or refer interested organizations to an Executive Committee member or to the Secretariat. Names of visiting participants must be submitted no later than 20 days prior to the next meeting. Suggestions received after that deadline will not be considered. The Chair will make decisions within ten days of receiving a suggestion. Recommending RHSC members will support visiting participants as needed and appropriate. The Chair may also invite visiting participants independently.

RHSC Chair

19. Chair tenure and selection. The Chair serves a two-year term that is staggered with the Executive Committee terms; the Chair has a one-time option to renew for another two-year term, with approval of the RHSC. One of the RHSC meetings shall be organized to coincide with the expiry of the Chair's term.

20. Before the term of the Chair is to expire, the Secretariat will invite members to nominate a new Chair. The Secretariat will follow up with nominated candidates. Nominees must: (i) be a member of the RHSC; (ii) be willing to fulfill the commitments of the Chair, including its representative role; and (iii) devote time and effort to enhance the Coalition; and (iv) have good oral and written communication skills, including fluency in English.

21. In the event of more than one candidate, the Secretariat will announce a vote to select a Chair on the basis of one vote for each RHSC member institution. The vote will be conducted by secret ballot and will take place at one of the semiannual RHSC meetings. RHSC members unavoidably unable to attend may notify the Chair of their vote in writing or through a proxy. The vote must be received in advance of the election. The Secretariat will oversee the voting process, provide facilitation as necessary, and advise the RHSC members of the outcome of the selection.

⁸ Two-year term.

⁹ Two-year term.

¹⁰ Contingent membership of the SI will be reviewed according to the initiative's future scope.

¹¹ Two-year term.

22. The incoming Chair-elect selected at an RHSC meeting overlaps and works with the existing Chair (who fully completes his/her term) before assuming full responsibilities (approximately six months).

23. Functions of the RHSC Chair. The Chair carries out the following responsibilities: (i) convenes and chairs the full RHSC meeting as well as the Executive Committee meetings; (ii) invites new members, upon recommendation of the Executive Committee, and visiting participants to attend meetings; (iii) prior to the meetings, identifies and secures meeting space, with assistance from the Secretariat, and oversees preparation and distribution of summaries of progress on RHSC activities; (iv) during meetings, encourages frank discussion and brings the group to consensus-based, action-oriented decisions; and (v) signs off on the full RHSC meeting reports.

24. As deemed necessary by the Executive Committee, the Chair will issue press releases on behalf of the RHSC. The Chair will also conduct a brief orientation with the new chair (for the following meeting), especially for any follow-up actions to be taken.

Organization of RHSC Meetings

25. Frequency and attendance. Meetings are scheduled to occur twice yearly. Members will identify at least one consistent representative to attend RHSC meetings, come to meetings fully briefed and prepared to speak on all agenda topics, and participate in phone conferences as needed. Members will also support the costs of the organization's participation in the RHSC. Developing-country members may request assistance from the Secretariat to help defray the costs of their participation in RHSC meetings.

26. Preparation of the meeting agenda and accompanying documentation. The agenda and documentation for the RHSC meetings will be prepared in accordance with the following steps:

- The Secretariat solicits agenda topics from the RHSC membership eight weeks prior to the meeting, requesting a ten-day response time. With guidance from the Executive Committee, the Secretariat prepares a provisional agenda that is submitted to the RHSC membership for comment no later than five weeks prior to the meeting, with a five-day response time. The Secretariat sends the revised agenda to the Executive Committee for approval three weeks prior to the meeting requesting a five-day response time. The final agenda is sent to the RHSC membership ten days prior to the meeting.
- The Secretariat, working with members submitting agenda items, prepares a concise summary highlighting issues (one-page maximum), their implications (including resource implications where appropriate), and recommends action(s) required of the RHSC. The Secretariat and members also recommend and provide additional relevant background material as necessary.
- RHSC members submit all presentation materials to the Secretariat no later than ten days prior to the meeting.

Documents for each meeting also include an update on RHSC activities and action plans. The Secretariat provides this as part of the pre-meeting packet so as to focus meeting time on issues for discussion rather than debriefing on informational issues.

27. Conduct of the meetings. The Chair oversees RHSC meetings assisted by other Coalition members or an expert facilitator, if needed. At the end of each agenda point, the facilitator provides a short summary of the discussion and of the decisions reached in order to gather clarification and recheck consensus among participants. The Secretariat documents meetings in the form of meeting minutes and action plans.

28. Follow-up of the results of the meetings. RHSC decisions are made on a consensus basis by a group consisting of one lead individual representing each member organization. Decisions by the RHSC are not considered binding upon member organizations and will not override their respective governing bodies.

IV. Executive Committee Operations¹²

Functions of the Executive Committee

29. The RHSC has an Executive Committee to provide broad guidance, oversight, and approval functions to support its operations and enhance decision-making.

30. Planning and budgeting. The Executive Committee: (i) guides and approves overall direction of the RHSC's strategic planning, work planning, and budgeting processes; (ii) provides programmatic oversight to RHSC fundraising activities as appropriate; (iii) approves comprehensive work plans and the communication strategy (both internal and external, including website); (iv) reviews the Secretariat's budget¹³ and sustainability strategy, and (v) facilitates RHSC fundraising activities by serving as a clearinghouse to ensure fundraising by different working groups is not at cross purposes.

31. Monitoring and evaluation. The Executive Committee: (i) approves monitoring and evaluation plans, (ii) provides periodic priority review of RHSC progress against goals and objectives, and (iii) makes recommendations to the Secretariat.

32. Preparation, conduct, and follow-up of RHSC meetings. The Executive Committee: (i) provides guidance to the Chair and Secretariat on preparation of full RHSC meetings and provides final agenda approval; (ii) attends and actively participates in full RHSC meetings, and (iii) acts as a check-in point on how implementation of working group action plans are accomplishing the RHSC mission.

33. Governance. The Executive Committee: (i) assists in identifying new members and approves membership recommendations and (ii) provides oversight to help ensure transparency and avoid or resolve conflict of interest.

Membership

34. Executive Committee Chair. The RHSC Chair serves as chair of the Executive Committee.

35. Composition of the Executive Committee. Membership will consist of both renewable and rotating members. Renewable members are: UNFPA, USAID, IPPF, World Bank, and the EC. One rotating member will serve a two-year term with options for consecutive terms by approval of the Executive Committee from each of the following groups: (i) civil society (such as organizations that represent an independent voice and that may have a watchdog function), (ii) foundations, and (iii) low-/middle-income governments.

36. Member selection and tenure. A determination will need to be made on when this new composition of the Executive Committee will become effective, as it involves some current Steering Committee members relinquishing their seats (i.e., at the October 2005 meeting).

Organization of Executive Committee Meetings

37. Frequency and attendance. The Committee meets four times a year to review RHSC progress and address emerging issues and in the interim as needed. Members' time and travel costs for participation in meetings are assumed by their institutions.¹⁴ For members unable to attend meetings but who want to participate, the Secretariat will identify "virtual" participation options.

¹² The Steering Committee was added to the RHSC in late 2004. In 2005 it was renamed the Executive Committee. After 12 months of operation (April 2006), the Executive Committee members facilitated by the Secretariat, will review the Executive Committee's role, functions, composition, and tenure, and recommend changes, as necessary, to the full RHSC.

¹³ Budget review will need to be undertaken in concert with the institution hosting the Secretariat and the funders supporting the Secretariat.

¹⁴ In the case of developing-country members, support to defray costs of participation may be available through the Secretariat.

38. Preparation of the meeting agenda and accompanying documentation. The Secretariat prepares meeting agendas and background documents in consultation with the RHSC Chair and with Executive Committee members.

39. Conduct of the meetings. The Committee makes decisions by consensus. Two-thirds of full Executive Committee membership is considered a quorum for meetings. The Secretariat prepares minutes of meetings and documentation of decisions and distributes them to the broader RHSC.

40. Follow-up of the results of the meetings.

V. Secretariat Operations

Functions of the Secretariat

41. The RHSC Secretariat: (i) coordinates, monitors, and facilitates all RHSC components, including the Chair, Executive Committee, and working groups and (ii) provides institutional continuity in the following areas:

42. Planning and budgeting. The Secretariat: (i) monitors the external environment and makes recommendations to the Executive Committee on RHSC direction; (ii) develops, in collaboration with the working group leaders, for Executive Committee approval, RHSC strategy (including milestones, indicators, etc.) and the comprehensive three-year work plan (Secretariat and working groups); (iii) develops for Executive Committee approval the RHSC internal and external communications plan and funding strategy for transition and sustainability of the Secretariat; (iv) finalizes and disseminates the RHSC strategy; and (v) develops the Secretariat budget for approval by the Executive Committee.

43. Monitoring and evaluation. The Secretariat: (i) develops, in collaboration with the working group leaders, for Executive Committee approval, the monitoring and evaluation plan; (ii) regularly monitors progress against strategic priorities and reports to the Executive Committee; (iii) prepares and disseminates (on behalf of the Executive Committee) to the full RHSC membership a semiannual summary of progress against the RHSC strategy plan; and (iv) in collaboration with RHSC members and based on the evaluation approach, documents successes arising from the RHSC.

44. Preparation, conduct, and follow-up of RHSC meetings. The Secretariat: (i) works with the Chair and Executive Committee to manage all aspects of RHSC meetings, including identification of issues, agenda preparation, and finalizing meeting dates and locations; prepares correspondence with members; retains the meeting facilitator; drafts and disseminates reports of meetings and teleconferences and a brief written progress report on past RHSC decisions for each meeting; and (ii) documents and reports Executive Committee meeting outcomes, recommendations, and decisions to the full RHSC.

45. Support to the working groups. The Secretariat assists and supports the working groups, as appropriate, in developing and implementing their action plans.

46. Representation. The Secretariat: (i) communicates priorities and progress of the RHSC within the larger RH community; (ii) represents the RHSC at relevant international and national forums and with various partners, including the commercial sector; and (iii) manages the RHSC website, if one is created.

47. Administration. The Secretariat: (i) provides overall cohesion to the RHSC and helps ensure the attainment of Coalition priorities, (ii) facilitates internal communications among RHSC members, (iii) facilitates the new member nomination process, and (iv) maintains RHSC archival files.

Organization of the Secretariat

48. Staffing. The Secretariat is led by a full-time Director and is staffed by program and support staff. The selection of the Director is subject to approval of the Executive Committee. The Director is responsible for the performance of the Secretariat and supervision of its staff.

49. Financing. It is anticipated that RHSC Secretariat operations will be financially underwritten on an interim basis (approximately 2006–2008) by grant funding. After this transition period, and assuming the RHSC is deemed by members as a useful mechanism for advancing RH supply security and beneficial to their work, Secretariat financial support will be provided through an RHSC member-approved funding mechanism based upon recommendations and options presented by the Director and Secretariat. (This may consist of member dues, grant funding, in-kind contributions, or a combination of these and other revenue streams.)

VI. Working Group Operations

Functions of the Working Groups

50. The working groups advise on critical directions and priorities and serve as the implementation and technical arms of the RHSC strategy; as such, they plan, coordinate, implement, and monitor actions, which build on the mandates, interests, resources, and comparative strengths of members, and represent core partnership activities. They will: (i) identify activities in support of the RHSC mission and goals and assign roles and responsibilities within the working group, (ii) coordinate with other working groups to ensure synergy of activities, and (iii) develop basic monitoring and evaluation plans and assume accountability for outcomes.

Organization of the Working Groups

51. Creation and dissolution. Any member of the Coalition, the Executive Committee, or the Secretariat can recommend the establishment of a working group. Recommendations are subject to Executive Committee approval and must be accompanied by a clear articulation of need for the group, technical objectives, and proposed linkages with other working groups' activities. The Executive Committee has the responsibility of determining when/if a working group should be initiated, restructured, or dissolved. Facilitated by the Secretariat, the Executive Committee will carry out an annual review of all working groups, including their progress and continued need. However, working groups are limited to the term of the RHSC strategy with an automatic sun-setting clause, subject to review of relevance and efficacy for the next strategy.

52. Currently the RHSC has three working groups: (i) Resource Mobilization and Awareness, (ii) Systems Strengthening, and (iii) Market Development Approaches.

53. The RHSC Chair, Executive Committee, or working groups may also convene task forces for ad hoc tasks or activities that do not require direct and continuous RHSC engagement. Participation in task forces is voluntary and the task force is accountable to the convener.

54. Membership. Membership in working groups is open to all RHSC members, based on their institutional mandates and interests. RHSC member institutions may serve on multiple working groups.

55. Organization of the work of the working groups. The working groups will: (i) meet as needed and make decisions by consensus and (ii) recommend, as appropriate for specific topics, that external experts be invited to participate in deliberations and provide guidance. Among its members, the working group will identify a leader who will: (i) convene the working group as needed or agreed and (ii) serve as the focal point and informal secretariat of the group, preparing meeting agendas and minutes and documenting decisions.

56. The working group leader is responsible for: (i) facilitating the development of a working group work plan to be submitted via the Secretariat to the Executive Committee for review and approval; (ii) identifying the roles and responsibilities of members and ensuring that activities are implemented and regular communication maintained with working group members; (iii) gathering monitoring and evaluation data; and (iv) providing written progress updates (at least twice annually) to the Executive Committee and the full RHSC via the Secretariat on progress, constraints, and assistance required.

57. Activities are supported by either participating working group organizations or through funds raised by the working group. The Secretariat may allocate modest financial support to working group leaders to cover expenses, as needed.