

**Organizational Principles and Structural/Governance
Terms of Reference for the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition¹**

June 3, 2009

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. 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.”² 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. 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 countries should take the lead in coordinating donor efforts. Donors should strive for greater consistency and coherence in their policies and practices.

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 Management 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.

¹ This dated version of the Terms of Reference draws heavily on the following resources:

- Organizational Principles and Structural/Governance: Terms of Reference for the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (October 5, 2005)
- Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition Strategic Plan: 2007–2015. (27 August 2007)
- Report of the Membership Task Force of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (David Johnson, HLSP, 16 October 2007)
- Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition. (23 October 2007, Washington, DC)
- Concept Paper: Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition Long-Term Secretariat Sustainability (9 January 2009)

² Population Action International. *Meeting the Reproductive Challenge: Securing Contraceptives and Condoms for HIV/AIDS Prevention*. Washington, DC: PAI; 2001. Meeting report.

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. That mechanism has henceforth come to be known as the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC).

The following sections lay out a structural terms of reference for the RHSC. They amend an initial Terms of Reference, adopted on October 5, 2005, by incorporating more recent developments associated with: the establishment of a dedicated full-time Secretariat in 2006, the endorsement of a new Strategic Plan by the Executive Committee on August 27, 2007, and the adoption on October 23, 2007 of a revised policy on membership and governance.

RHSC Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles, Goals and Objectives

6. *The RHSC's vision* is that all people in low and middle-income (LMI) countries can access and use affordable, high-quality supplies, including a broad choice of contraceptives, to ensure their better reproductive health.

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 RHSC 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.
- Recognizes the role of both industrialized and developing-country manufacturers for planning, providing, and delivering quality RH supplies.
- Strives to ensure greater equity and improve access to RH supplies for those who are poor and marginalized.
- Recognizes that the needs of RH service clients are very diverse and will vary significantly during their reproductive life cycles. These varying needs, from contraception to safe delivery and treatment of STIs, require that clients have access to a range of products during their reproductive lives. The RHSC will ensure that efforts to secure RH supplies are informed by the demands and needs of those at the receiving end. It will, among other things, draw attention to underused RH options and the research needed to fill RH diagnostic, drug, and contraceptive method gaps.

- Recognizes that RH commodity security is undermined by the low priority given to reproductive health generally, which derives in no small part from women's low status, limited resources, and little power in decision-making.

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

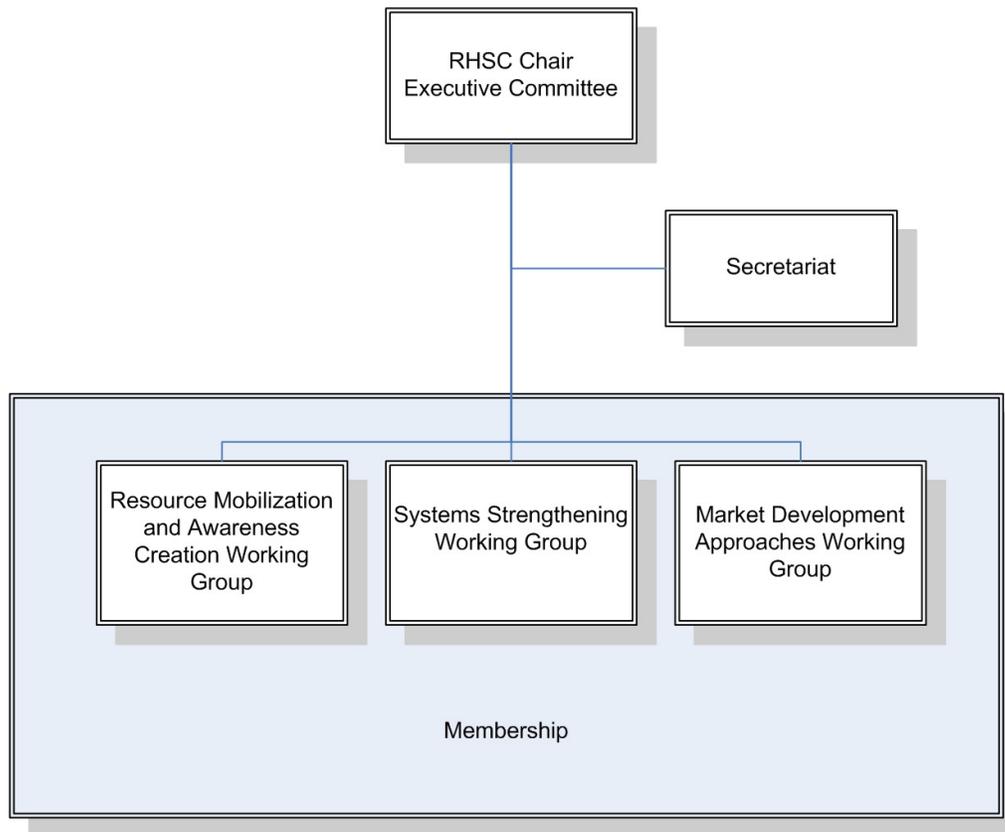
- Increase the availability, predictability, and sustainability of financing for RH supplies
- Strengthen the capacity of health systems to deliver RH supplies in a sustainable manner
- Assure the added value of the RHSC as a productive and sustainable global partnership through support for efficiency, advocacy, and innovation.

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.

11. The RHSC adds value to the work of its member organizations by helping them to accomplish more, collectively, than they could otherwise do on their own. The RHSC provides members with a forum for technical collaboration and problem-solving, serves as a "brain trust" of relevant expertise and experience, and promotes greater efficiency through improved coordination and harmonization. It increases global awareness of supply issues through strengthened advocacy. It supports the development of total markets for RH supplies and it seeks out resources for innovative ideas and research.

RHSC Structure³



III. RHSC Operations

Functions of the RHSC

12. The RHSC is an international, voluntary partnership dedicated to ensuring that people in low and middle-income (LMI) countries can obtain and use high-quality reproductive health (RH) supplies, including a broad range of contraceptive methods. 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. 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.

³ 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.

Membership⁴

14. The RHSC's success depends on the knowledge, experience, and involvement of its member organizations. It is from these organizations that the RHSC fills its key governance posts, creates Working Groups, and identifies and implements key recommendations. Membership in the RHSC is open to any legally-registered organization with a significant programmatic and/or financial stake in RH supply security. This includes multilateral organizations, bilateral and private foundation donors, governments, civil society, inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector. Membership is not open to "subsidiaries" of RHSC members, where the subsidiaries maintain no legal status independent of the parent organization. Typical of this category would be regional representatives of international federations, local offices of bilateral and multilateral development agencies, or development projects managed and/or implemented by a single member organization. Development projects comprising more than one organization, (even if the constituent organizations already belong to the RHSC), are eligible for membership. Individuals are not eligible for membership.

15. The Secretariat is empowered to approve the membership of any eligible institution that 1) acknowledges, in writing, its adherence to the RHSC's vision, strategic goals, Terms of Reference, and core values; 2) allows its name to be listed publicly as a RHSC member; and 3) declares any conflicts of interest that may arise as a result of its membership. In cases of uncertainty or dispute, the Secretariat may refer applications to the Executive Committee for decision.

16. The Executive Committee reserves the right to rescind membership of any organisation that is deemed to be no longer adhering to the criteria for membership

17. Except in instances that could lead to conflicts of interest, member organizations have access to all RHSC tools, resources, and web-based information. Members are entitled to Secretariat support in networking with other RHSC members and affiliates.

18. Member organizations may join and participate in any of the RHSC's working groups and propose topics for follow-up by the working groups, the Executive Committee, and/or the Secretariat. Members are also entitled to a key governance role in the RHSC. They may vote for and serve as the Head of any Working Group in which they are involved; and serve as a member of the Executive Committee, including the role of Chair. RHSC members are expected to cover the costs of their participation at all RHSC-related events, including membership meetings and working group sessions.

RHSC Chair

19. Representatives of any member organization may stand as a candidate for the post of Chair. Eligibility is not limited to current members of the Executive Committee.

20. The Chair serves a two-year term, with the option to extend for up to an additional two-years, with approval of the Executive Committee. The annual RHSC membership meeting shall be organized to coincide with the expiry of the Chair's term.

21. To ensure transparency and minimize any potential conflicts of interest, recruitment for the post of Chair will be overseen by a Nomination Committee. The Committee comprises a representative of the Executive Committee elected by members of the Executive Committee, the RHSC Director, and the three working group leaders. No later than nine months before the term of the Chair is to expire, the Nomination Committee, together with the Secretariat will invite members to nominate a new Chair. 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 RHSC; and (iv) have good oral and written communication skills, including fluency in English.

⁴Clauses 14 through 19 are drawn from the *Report of the Membership Task Force of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition* (David Johnson, HLSP, 16 October 2007) and the minutes of the 23 Oct 2007 Executive Committee meeting, during which the Report was endorsed.

22. Six months prior to the end of the Chair's term, the Nomination Committee will forward to the Executive Committee the names of all eligible nominees for the post of incoming Chair. The Executive Committee will elect the incoming Chair six months prior to the general membership meeting, when the term of the new Chair officially begins.

23. In the event of more than one candidate, the Nomination Committee will announce a vote to select a Chair on the basis of one vote for each Executive Committee member. The vote will be conducted by secret ballot. Executive Committee members 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.

24. The Executive Committee will, by straight majority (at least 7 votes) of those in favor, elect the Chair

25. If no one nomination secures more than 6 votes then the nomination with the lowest votes will be excluded and a further vote taken. If a stalemate is reached through abstentions then further nominations may be sought by the Executive Committee and a further election held.

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

27. 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.

28. 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

29. General membership meetings will be held annually in late spring or early summer. 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.

30. 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 no later than ten days prior to the meeting.
- The Secretariat, working with members submitting agenda items may recommend and provide additional relevant background material as necessary.
- RHSC members wishing to have materials distributed in advance to meeting participants must present them to the Secretariat no later than ten days prior to the meeting.

31. Conduct of the meetings. The Chair oversees RHSC meetings assisted by other RHSC members or an expert facilitator, if needed. The Secretariat documents meetings in the form of meeting minutes and action plans.

32. 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 Operations⁵

Functions of the Executive Committee

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

34. 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 of the RHSC and working groups; (iv) reviews the Secretariat's budget⁶ and sustainability strategy, and (v) facilitates RHSC fundraising activities.

35. 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.

36. 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.

37. 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.

Membership⁷

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

39. Members of the Executive Committee occupy the following non-permanent, rotating seats. Terms are for two-years and are renewable unless indicated otherwise:

- a. Chair of the Executive Committee⁸
- b. Head of the RMA WG
- c. Head of the Systems Strengthening WG
- d. Head of the MDA WG
- e. The UN agency currently mandated to address reproductive health supplies
- f. The largest bilateral contributor to reproductive health commodities
- g. A second bilateral agency providing support to reproductive health supply security
- h. Non-governmental organization with the largest global reproductive health service delivery network (qualification reviewed every 2 years)
- i. Global South regional body with a focus on reproductive health (incumbent non-renewable)
- j. The largest philanthropic contributor to the operational costs of the RHSC.

⁵ The Steering Committee was added to the RHSC in late 2004. In 2005 it was renamed the Executive Committee.

⁶ Budget review will be undertaken in concert with the institution hosting the Secretariat and the funders supporting the Secretariat.

⁷ Clauses 39 through 42 are drawn from the *Report of the Membership Task Force of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition* (David Johnson, HLSP, 16 October 2007) the contents of which were endorsed by the Executive Committee at its semi-annual meeting on 23 Oct 2007.

⁸ At its semi-annual meeting on 21 May 2008, the Executive Committee endorsed a return to the policy of a single Chair

- k. An international financing institution.
- l. Director (ex officio)

40. As members of the Executive Committee, working group leaders represent their working groups and its thematic interest, not the organization to which they belong. Furthermore, they cannot concurrently occupy any seat allocated under items 39a or 39e-l above.

41. Representation on the Executive Committee of any single organisation (working group leaders exempted) is limited to one seat. Should an organization satisfy the requirements for more than one seat (e.g. largest bilateral donor is also the largest contributor to RHSC), Executive Committee will decide whether only one seat is to be filled, or whether the second seat will be filled by the next organisation in line to occupy the seat.⁹

42. Unless authorized by the Chair in advance, attendance at Executive Committee meetings will be limited to the Executive Committee member only or to his/her replacement in cases of absence.

Organization of Executive Committee Meetings

43. Frequency and attendance. The Committee meets twice 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.¹⁰

44. 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.

45. 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.

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

V. Secretariat Operations

Functions of the Secretariat

47. The Secretariat provides and maintains overall RHSC focus, direction, and cohesion. It ensures broad member participation in attaining Coalition goals and priorities. It ensures a transparent structure and framework for effective and streamlined Coalition priority setting, decision-making, collaboration, and action. And it develops and implements tools and guidance needed to enable the Coalition to achieve its goals. The Secretariat provides institutional continuity in the following areas:

48. 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.

49. 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) in collaboration with

⁹ In November 2008, the Executive Committee suspended this provision to allow for the inclusion of two representatives of a Global South regional body. At the end of the representatives' two-year tenure, the Committee will decide whether to maintain two seats for the Global South or return to the original policy of one seat.

¹⁰ In the case of developing-country members, support to defray costs of participation may be available through the Secretariat.

RHSC members and based on the evaluation approach, documents successes arising from the RHSC.

50. 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.

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

52. 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.

53. Membership. The Secretariat is charged with managing the membership process including maintaining an up-to-date membership list and posting it on the RHSC website.

54. Administration. The Secretariat: (i) provides overall cohesion to the RHSC and helps ensure the attainment of RHSC 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

55. 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.

56. Financing. 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

57. Working groups are the principal vehicles through which RHSC members collaborate on a sustained, formal basis to realize the RHSC's strategic goals. 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 Groups¹¹

58. Creation and dissolution. Any member of the RHSC, the Executive Committee, or the Secretariat can recommend the establishment of a working group. Recommendations are subject to Executive

¹¹ Clauses 61 and 63 are drawn from the *Report of the Membership Task Force of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition* (David Johnson, HLSP, 16 October 2007), the contents of which were endorsed by the Executive Committee at its semi-annual meeting on 23 Oct 2007.

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.

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

60. 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.

61. Membership. Membership in working groups is open to all RHSC members, based on their institutional mandates and interests. This right, however, does not apply to sub-groups or task-forces which maybe established for specific reasons, and where extended membership would not be in the interests of the sub-group or facilitate the achievement of its goals. RHSC member institutions may serve on multiple working groups.

62. 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.

63. Leadership of working groups. Among its members, the working group will formally elect 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. Members exercise one organizational vote to elect the leader of any working group in which they are active (non-members cannot vote). The term of office of a working group leader is two years.

64. 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.

65. Activities are supported by 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 core expenses, as needed.