

Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC) Steering Committee Meeting Summary

October 5, 2005

Steering Committee Members

Participating: Elizabeth Lule, Chair (World Bank), Jacqui Darroch (Gates Foundation), Terri Bartlett (SI), Jagdish Upadhyay (UNFPA), Jotham Musinguzi (Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development, Uganda), Margaret Neuse (USAID), Steve Sinding (IPPF)

Not Participating: Jaime Buitrago (PROFAMILIA Colombia)

Other Participants (member, support staff, guests)

Margret Verwijk (The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Alan Bornbusch (USAID), Hedia B. El-Gouayel (UNFPA), Jerry Chambers (Consultant), Peter Bachrach (Consultant), Jane Hutchings, Jessie Gleckel, and Marian Weldin (SI/PATH/Secretariat Staff)

AGENDA

Objectives and Outcomes:

1. To use the business plan to guide the planning and decision-making of the RHSC by the Steering Committee for the medium term.
2. To review current work plans and identify gaps.
3. To provide final decision on outstanding issues related to the RHSC TOR and organizational issues.

Discussion of Options to Engage Manufacturers

RHSC TOR and Organization

- Decision on final TOR
- Chair nominating/selection process
- Update on the secretariat proposal

Presentation of the Draft Business Plan

Planning for the Medium Term

- Gaps in the business plan
- Decisions on options
- Next Steps

Work Plan Review

MEETING SUMMARY

Overview

Elizabeth Lule thanked The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs for hosting the meeting, and reviewed the agenda. The Steering Committee discussed the options for engaging the private sector and identified the Total Market Approach (TMA)¹ Working Group as a mechanism for continuing investigation of the various options. The Steering Committee reviewed and made final changes to the RHSC Terms of Reference (TOR), which will be presented to the RHSC members for endorsement on the first day of the RHSC meeting. The Steering Committee also reviewed the Business Plan (renamed Strategic Plan) and the working groups' work plans and determined how the Strategic Plan should feed into the working group planning process over the two-day RHSC meeting.

Options to Engage Manufacturers

General Statement

Jerry Chambers, Consultant, stated that the private sector can and should be engaged in achieving the objectives of the Cairo mandate. The RHSC can play a role in bringing about the engagement of private-sector manufacturers in the reproductive health supply arena. Referring to his background paper, "Options for How the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition Can Engage With Manufacturers of Reproductive Health Commodities," Jerry cited a number of advantages of working with the private commercial sector. He reviewed three options for engagement as laid out in the paper. He advised that the RHSC move from a "silo" approach to working with commercial manufacturers to a more horizontal approach noting that communication with manufacturers is a critical need. A recommended approach would be for the RHSC to take on the role of ombudsman and act as a liaison between donors, programs, and the private sector.

Discussion

- The RHSC needs to define their engagement with manufacturers, including the role and added value of the Coalition. There also are two levels: the RHSC as a whole, and within it specific working groups.
- Conflict of interest issues might indicate the need for a separate manufacturers' forum, such as an advisory or discussion group to consider issues such as affordability/pricing and regulation/need for product approval.
- RHSC engagement with commercial manufacturers on an ongoing basis would need to be built into someone's job.
- Fifteen years ago (and still somewhat under discussion) there was an idea to create a "global facility" to pool donor funds to more accurately predict demand and get lower prices. It is unlikely that this will be realized, and RHSC members already have relationships with commercial manufacturers. The fundamental question remains, "How do we get the best value for money?" A private-sector liaison or ombudsman is unlikely to affect that fundamental need.
- Should there be a method-specific focus (IUDs for example) that drives more commercial-sector engagement?

¹ The TMA Working Group was renamed Market Development Approaches (MDA) Working Group at the RHSC meeting October 6.

- Impediments to access through a second tier or other tiers need to be examined.
- ***Elizabeth summarized the discussion:***
 - *The ultimate RHSC outcome should be that countries are better able to get affordable supplies.*
 - *Part of this approach is unleashing the market and looking at the second tier.*
 - *We need to clarify what manufacturers can best contribute. The best mechanism at present is through the work of the Total Market Approach Working Group.*

Decision: Primary responsibility for engaging RH supply manufacturers lies with the Total Market Approach Working Group. Should a broader discussion be warranted, the working group will propose what is needed and why.

RHSC TOR and Organization

General Statement

Jane Hutchings acknowledged the work of the TOR Task Force and reviewed the final version of the RHSC TOR, which was revised according to the recommendations of the TOR Task Force and feedback from the Steering Committee members on those recommendations. The Executive Committee was requested to endorse the final, revised version of the TOR.

Discussion on TOR

- It was requested that the RHSC ask EuroNGOs to be represented; it was noted that they would be represented through the working groups.
- The Steering Committee endorsed the size and composition of membership of the Executive Committee as presented in the TOR, but will decide on specifics later, based on recommendations coming out of the Resource Mobilization and Awareness (RMA) Working Group discussions on the process and rationale for selection of the civil society representative.² Current members will serve out their term through the spring RHSC meeting.
- The Steering Committee clarified the process for selection of countries for RHSC membership. The Committee charged the new Secretariat with developing criteria for developing-country representation, both as to country and as to specific representatives. The Secretariat will work with the working groups in developing criteria and in identifying representatives. The general criteria developed in 2004 can serve as a foundation. In addition, countries represented should include a range of economic levels and a range of levels of RHS self-sufficiency.

The Secretariat will present the proposed new members to the Executive Committee.

² The RMA Working Group should propose criteria for selecting representatives; within civil society there are technical agencies as well as advocacy groups, and some civil society organizations working in areas related to Working Group activities will be invited to participate in Working Group activities, though not as RHSC members. RHSC membership should include southern as well as northern representation. When listing a civil society organization, information regarding whether or not it is part of a network should be included—and if it is, which network(s).

Decisions

- The Steering Committee endorsed the revised TOR with some additional changes, which are reflected in the version of October 5.
- The Steering Committee revised and synthesized the goals stated in the TOR and in the Strategy document to have one operative list of goals.
- The Steering Committee brainstormed the added value of the RHSC, and this list was included in the TOR.
- The Steering Committee decided that there would no longer be a Nominating Committee for the Chair. The selection process for filling the Chair position will be as follows:
 - The Secretariat issues a call for nominations.
 - The Secretariat receives nominations and certifies nominees as to their willingness to serve as Chair.
 - When there is more than one candidate, the Secretariat develops a ballot.
 - The RHSC membership will vote for the new Chair by ballot.

Update on Secretariat Proposal

General Statement

Jane Hutchings noted that the Secretariat proposal PATH prepared for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation was based on TOR discussions, PATH's July 2005 concept paper, and subsequent Steering Committee discussions. PATH intends to submit the proposal to the Foundation in early October. (Jane's presentation is included here as Appendix 1.)

Discussion

- The three-year time frame reflects the fact that the proposal requests bridging funding for a transitional period, with the intent that this should lead to other support ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Secretariat.
- The Director position is pivotal, and it will be critical for the Steering Committee and other RHSC members to assist with the identification and recruitment for the position, hopefully to be accomplished in the first quarter of 2006. One responsibility of the Director will be identifying resources to ensure future support of the Secretariat.
- The job description for the Director position was distributed to the Steering Committee and their input requested. The description will be distributed to the RHSC when finalized, with a request for their assistance in identifying candidates for the position.
- It will be important for other donors and members of the RHSC to support the Secretariat. Steering Committee members representing UNFPA and IPPF stated their willingness to contribute either financially or through in-kind contributions such as offices in Europe that can contribute support by hosting meeting as well as in other ways, as appropriate.
- The proposed location for the Secretariat is PATH'S office in Washington, DC. Europe may be ultimately the best location, but because consistency is important during the time of transition, for the present it will be located at PATH, in the US. This may change before the three-year transitional period is over.

Business Plan (Strategic Plan) Overview

General Statement

Peter Bachrach presented the draft "Business Plan" (from here on to be referred to as Strategic Plan), included here as Appendix 2. The Strategic Plan document represents a summary of the

existing documents developed during the first year and a half of the RHSC. Peter identified three themes that run throughout the documents and the working group plans: promotion, monitoring, and coordination. It pulls together the various elements of the RHSC and identifies issues that will need to be addressed as a business plan is developed. The Steering Committee discussion resulted in several revisions to the Strategic Plan. Peter will prepare a final draft of the plan with revisions based on the Steering Committee discussions and working group progress. The final draft will provide a good framework and starting point for the new RHSC Director, who will continue its further development.

General Discussion

- The Strategic Plan presents a good framework. It is a starting point that takes stock of the current status of the RHSC and outlines a tracking process and indicators. The Steering Committee will present it to the RHSC membership as a tool to help the RHSC move forward:
 - Working groups can use it as they prioritize activities and analyze gaps, enabling environment and other factors critical to implementation of activities.
 - The new RHSC Director will use it in working with working groups and the Executive Committee to further develop an actual business plan.
- The final business plan, which is the charge of the Director, should:
 - Lay out a process for planning country-level efforts and how these efforts will be coordinated across the working groups (Will working groups plan to work in the same countries? Will there be a nexus?).
 - Develop a systematic way of measuring goals.
 - Make clear the role of RHSC advocacy—specifically, how the RHSC can influence governments and exert leverage/influence to ensure that some entity at the country level is addressing needs in a country. Also, RHSC advocacy can help ensure that its tools and other mechanisms are utilized by countries as they address supply issues.
 - Reflect demand issues.
 - Identify country-level opportunity costs and benefits.
 - Present a plan for how the RHSC will evolve as a business and support itself.
 - Clarify the larger issues affecting RH supply security and, within that larger context, identify what the Coalition can take responsibility for, work on together as a group, and be held accountable for.
- Moving forward it is essential to be clear about the larger supplies issue(s) and what the RHSC can do to address it.
- One important element that differentiates the RHSC from other global partnerships is the lack of a dedicated Secretariat. Part of the role of the Secretariat is to direct and harness the technical capacity within the RHSC and identify and secure other needed technical resources as necessary.
- Identify the role of RHSC in regard to HIV/AIDS and RH integration (i.e., condoms).
- In considering the Strategic Plan, the RHSC should keep in mind the just-completed Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Summit and the MDG quick wins and ten focus countries. Impact of the partnerships at the country level has not really been examined. In particular, the RHSC should take into account which countries are achieving the MDGs and are taking control of supplies issues. The RHSC can help with integration of strategic dimensions in supply access.

- The RHSC will need to clarify the value of what each individual institution is doing to advance the RHSC goals. The RHSC should play a clearinghouse role. There is value to all in understanding what each member is doing. The RHSC needs to work toward:
 - Eliminating duplication of effort.
 - Coordinating work.
 - Identifying gaps that partners can invest in.
- The RHSC will need to clarify its role vis à vis any country-level work: this was “finished” at the last meeting. The work PAI did in identifying common countries, as well as the MDG countries and the MDA countries, all provide guidance. In addition, UNFPA has identified a set of focus countries.
- The challenges for the work plans are:
 - Articulating what needs to happen.
 - Seeing if one or more player can implement the needed work on their own.
 - Identifying gaps.

Value Added of the RHSC

The RHSC can:

- Do more with existing resources through collaboration, communication, and coordination.
- Leverage additional resources.
- Address barriers and limitations that individual organizations cannot address.
- Exert influence, generate interest, and get supplies issues on agendas.
- Allow the opportunity for a forum that is acceptable in a politically charged environment.
- Create an enabling political environment.
- Share information.
- Encourage and coordinate harmonization.
- Make a single system out of disparate systems.
- Link to global groups like the Global Fund.
- Coordinate supply security efforts at the global and country levels.

Decisions

- The Steering Committee agreed that the five RHSC goals stated in the TOR should be the same as those stated in the Strategic Plan, so as to have one operative list of goals. The Steering Committee added a section to the Strategic Plan listing value added.
- On Thursday and Friday, the working groups should continue to develop and revise their work plans, based on their agreed-upon priorities, the four areas of concern (listed below), and the five revised goals. To help the working groups initiate their discussions, the Steering Committee linked some specific goals to working groups and recommended that working groups consider focusing on the goal and possible priority activities. Annex 2 of the strategy can be used to help stimulate thinking. (On Thursday this list was distributed to the working groups as Working Group Priorities Related to RHSC Goals).
- In moving forward each working group should assess:
 1. Strategic thinking (What is the value added of the RHSC?).
 2. Selectiveness (Which priorities will be addressed by the RHSC, within an overall strategic context?).

3. Efficiency (how can the RHSC deliver on its priorities within a specific time frame and with limited resources?).
4. Effectiveness (how can RHSC efforts be measured and identify indicators?).

Systems Working Group Proposal

Alan Bornbusch reported that the Systems Strengthening Working Group work plan includes management of the Reproductive Health Interchange (RHI) as one of its activities, with the RHI Management Committee functioning within the Systems Strengthening Working Group. JSI is developing a proposal to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to fund the RHI over three years, with a decreasing amount each year as core support from RHSC members and users is marshaled. Alan requested Steering Committee endorsement of the approach to RHI management within the RHSC and the concept of three years of funding.

Decision

The Steering Committee endorsed Alan's proposal.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Presentation by Jane Hutchings on the Secretariat proposal PATH prepared for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Appendix 2 – Presentation by Peter Bachrach on the Draft Strategic Plan

Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC) Steering Committee Meeting Summary

October 7, 2005

Participating: Elizabeth Lule, Chair (World Bank), Jacqui Darroch (Gates Foundation), Terri Bartlett (SI), Jagdish Upadhyay (UNFPA), Jotham Musinguzi (Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development, Uganda), Margaret Neuse (USAID)

Discussion

Elizabeth Lule asked members for their impressions of the meeting and progress made.

General impressions were favorable with a sense that The Hague meeting had taken the RHSC to a different level. Jotham Musinguzi noted that RHSC discussions are making a difference at the country level.

Specific comments for future meetings included:

- Arrange the agenda so working group breakout periods do not come initially at the end of the day.
- Identify how to reduce the number of documents [Jane's addition subsequent to meeting: a possible solution with the new Secretariat staff is a summary document with highlights of key documents. In addition, participants presenting documents also could develop an Executive Summary, specifically aimed at the RHSC, explaining how the document fits in with goals and work of the group.].
- Move the plenary toward an issue or thematic focus with ample time for discussion, perhaps including panels representing different vantage points. The working group priorities should help define these thematic areas.
- Prioritize the agenda better.
- Allow more time for discussion of working group plans/progress.
- A full day Executive Committee in advance of the larger meeting was extremely important and should be continued.
- Internal and external communications remain critical issues, and these are to be addressed within the context of the new dedicated Secretariat.
- The Executive Committee needs to review working group plans. The Secretariat will contact working groups with a deadline for submission of their plans.
- The buffer/stability fund is something that should be developed. Are we thinking creatively and big enough? Alan Bornbusch will identify a consultant to flesh out this concept prior to the next RHSC meeting.
- Peter Bachrach will revise the Strategy document based on input, will remove Annex 2, and will save the list of potential indicators. He will follow up with Elizabeth, as the current Chair, and with the two new Chairs, Margret Verwijk and Wolfgang Bichmann.
- Consideration needs to be given to support for developing-country representatives to participate in interim working group meetings.
- UNFPA agreed to host the next meeting in New York. Likely dates are April, 26–28 2006 pending confirmation with Thoraya.

Secretariat Proposal Update

Key Elements

- Based on 7/05 Concept Paper
 - Gates Foundation format
- Three year time frame starting 1/06
- Draws from current TOR
 - Secretariat functions
 - RHSC Director responsibilities

Secretariat Objectives

- Provide and maintain overall Coalition focus, direction and cohesion through close collaboration with the Executive Committee and Working Groups.
- Ensure broad RHSC member participation
- Ensure clear, transparent structure and framework for effective and streamlined RHSC priority setting, decision-making, collaboration, and action.

Secretariat Objectives, con't.

- Develop and implement tools and guidance necessary to enable RHSC to achieve its goals. These include:
 - Strategies and work plans
 - Monitoring and evaluation plan
 - Communication plan
 - Internal
 - External

Secretariat Objectives, con't

- Develop and implement plan for permanent Secretariat and self-sustaining operations

Staffing and Budget

- Staffing (FTE):
 - Director
 - Technical Officer
 - Program Associate
- Three Year Budget:
- \$3,279,388
 - Increased travel
 - Consultant line item
 - External mid-term evaluation
- Location: Washington, DC

Purpose of the Business Plan (as indicated in Paragraph 1)

to provide a more coordinated and structured response to the issue of reproductive health commodities/supplies security

to indicate formally the RHSC's commitment, as separate organizations and as a coalition, to the objectives of promoting adequate supplies and sustainable financing of reproductive health supplies

Organization of the Business Plan

Text is organized in four sections:

- I. Context
- II. Mission, goals, objectives, and measures
- III. Guiding principles and organizational arrangements
- IV. Costs and benefits

Five annexes, of which 2 and 3 may eventually be merged

1. List of member organizations (i.e., B.P. signatories)
2. Proposed framework for organizing potential RHSC issues
3. Working Group action plans
4. Proposed organizational structure for the RHSC
5. Operational Directives for the RHSC

General concern: What do we expect from the Business Plan and the planning process?

- Strategic thinking, i.e., what is the value added of the RHSC?
- Selectiveness, i.e., which priorities will be addressed by the RHSC within an overall strategic context?
- Efficiency, i.e., how the RHSC can deliver on its priorities within a specific time frame and with limited resources?
- Effectiveness, i.e., whether the RHSC has established adequate modalities for measuring its results and correcting its actions?

Technical concerns 1: Does the BP adequately reflect the RHSC's strategic concerns?

- in terms of the roles and responsibilities of the different actors at global and country levels of the RHSC
- in terms of the country characteristics
- in terms of the linkages between national and international markets

Technical concerns 2: Does the BP sufficiently operationalize the RHSC's commitment to and accountability for the goals and objectives of the Coalition

- in terms of areas where, over time, the Coalition should see measurable results
- in terms of ambitions (promotion, coordination, monitoring) and available resources
- in terms of governance

Technical concerns 3: Does the BP adequately address prioritization, targeting, sequencing, cost, and measurement of results

- in terms of what constitutes the focus areas of the individual members and the added value of the RHSC
- in terms of what should be included in the Working Group plans

Procedural concerns 1: What do we expect of this document at this stage?

- Are the technical concerns correct?
- Does it accurately express the Coalition's previous decisions and current thinking?
- What do we do about the unfinished sections?

Procedural concerns 2: What do we say to the Membership tomorrow?

- What should be presented to the group
- What issues should the Working Groups address?
Do we use Annex 2 as the starting point with the various steps proposed to develop the discussions?

Proposed steps to organize the Working Group sessions - 1

Agree in plenary on:

- major blocks of interest (global analysis and strategy, public sector strengthening, and private/commercial sector expansion);
- 5 goals in Annex 2 work (knowing that this will lead to some minor revisions to the TORs); and
- the objectives (i.e., underlined phrases in Annex 2) and the concept of grouping actions in terms of promotion, coordination of technical support, and monitoring).

Proposed steps to organize the Working Group sessions - 2

Then ask the Working Groups to:

- review the actions and decide whether the activities belong to their group and whether they are appropriately categorized (promotion, coordination, monitoring); and
- develop/propose additional activities in terms of promotion, TA, monitoring to carry out their actions.

Finally, agree on:

- a format for presenting the work plans
- next steps for estimating costs, sources of financing, and a calendar for these activities

Practical considerations in the preparation of the Business Plan

- Models: Partnership for Maternal/Newborn and TB Control
- Constraints: Time (three weeks); existing work (Minutes of previous meetings, TORs, work plans); continuing discussion over the responsibilities of the Coalition members
- Usability: Brief overview which draws in elements of the more detailed annexes which will evolve