

Steering Committee
Outcomes
7 and 8 October, 2009

The Humanitarian Forum also convened a workshop on 6 October about Somalia: please see separate Minutes for that meeting.

Opening session

His Excellency, Mohammed Elmi, Minister of State for the Development of Northern Kenya and Other Arid Lands opened the meeting and welcomed The Humanitarian Forum members to Kenya. He commenced the discussion by reflecting on some of the key humanitarian challenges hindering international humanitarian relief efforts. Some of the challenges are low capacities, NGOs as businesses and remote programming; there can be advantages in working through trusted contacts but this is not always appropriate. The Minister also spoke candidly about challenges facing Kenya. **“As humanitarian actors, whether in Government or in NGOs, we have to improve systems, come together, share systems”**.

Ambassador Atta El-Manan Bakhit, Assistant Secretary General for the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Humanitarian Affairs department commented that **“We are meeting at a very crucial time, when the world is facing great humanitarian crises ... [It is] important to have a multilateral approach to responding to them ... The Humanitarian Forum has proved to be an indispensable tool.”**

Achievements since the last meeting

International: James Shaw-Hamilton described some of the achievements over the last 6 months. The Humanitarian Forum has helped to improve quality in the pilot countries through guidance to the national Directors and Boards.

We have also arranged several workshops to build bridges between national and international organizations:

- Cooperation in Yemen: UNOCHA and Oxfam
- Accountability in Yemen: Charity Commission
- Capacity building and financial management for Kuwait: Charity Commission and Islamic Relief

Other examples of building bridges include:

- A HOPE for Somalia workshop
- Meeting with some of the world’s largest humanitarian organizations (Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response)

- UNFPA policy consultation of international faith based organizations
- World Bank Faith Leaders Meeting
- Clinton Global Initiative
- Dr Hany interviews on Al Jazeera and Islam Online

Indonesia: Hening Parlan presented the main achievements and activities that HFI has undertaken since the last meeting in April. The focus has been on humanitarian coordination and standards, and related capacity building. Local members have participated in capacity building workshops organized by colleagues from the forum. Hening also mentioned the role the local forum has had in reviewing the Sphere Standards. Expansion of membership has been an additional area of focus, with 30 local NGOs expressing interest in joining the Forum. The local board has been discussing the role the Forum in the realm of coordination and cooperation. The work-plan emphasizes greater coordination in: disaster preparedness (through training and lobbying), emergency response (in Padang and elsewhere: rapid assessments, regular meetings), and increased dialogue between local governments and communities.

Kuwait: Ibrahim Hassaballa reported that registration of HFK as a local NGO is still ongoing due to delays in the work of the Kuwaiti Cabinet; the registration has already been approved by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Once registered, HFK will be able to start activities. There have been preparatory workshops in London and Kuwait about the capacity building strategy and developing a unified accounting system.

Sudan: Dr Hany reported conversations with Presidential Advisers about the expulsion of the international NGOs. He expressed his hope that this would soon allow for larger meetings. HF has received significant support from Makki Mohamed and Islamic Relief.

Yemen: Ahmad al Sharaji announced that Humanitarian Forum Yemen had been registered as an independent organization in June. Since the last meeting, the Charity Commission together with HFY organized a one day workshop on accountability. The 25 participants benefited from the introduction of best practice and financial management tools. One of the main outcomes of the workshop was to set-up a working group to look into local accountability practices in greater detail. A coordination and cooperation workshop was also organized with UN OCHA; since then HFY has been looking into various projects as a practical example of coordination among members. Expansion of HFY membership, completion of an accountability code, and the implementation of the EC capacity building project represented some of the future plans for the local forum in Yemen.

Later in the meeting, there was a general discussion about the humanitarian situation in Saada.

Action: Following discussion, it was agreed that HF London and the national forums will develop performance indicators, based on a Development Stages document agreed by the Trustees in July.

Humanitarian principles

Ronald Oferinger reminded the participants that Humanitarian Principles represented one of the main themes of the discussion at the last meeting. It had been agreed that a working group would be formed to draw up a draft set of humanitarian principles relevant to both “Islamic” and “western” traditions.

Khalid Diab thanked Huseyin Ourc and IHH for the work they had done on an Islamic code for the OIC, and the analysis that his colleague Dr Fawzi had done more recently. Following the Steering Committee’s request for The Humanitarian Forum to develop specific products, a smaller group met to discuss the issues, facilitated by Khalid.

Action: The group reported back to plenary that they would “root” the Red Cross Code of Conduct within the tradition, ethics and law of Islam, for agreement at the next Steering Committee meeting. To allow discussion at the next Steering Committee meeting, Khalid will arrange for a draft document to be compiled by him, Huseyin, Ahmad and Hening. Khalid will send this to Ronald and Ed by the end of December, and give them one month to make comments. Khalid will then send the final text to HF London in February for circulation to the Steering Committee.

Over a longer time, the group will develop a Code/commentary for additional Islamic principles that are not in the Red Cross Code of Conduct.

Ronald also spoke about a project that the ICRC had managed about rooting International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in Islam, bearing in mind the unprecedented public scrutiny of humanitarian situations. The ICRC had addressed this through a series of conferences developed with Islamic scholars in Iran, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan and Yemen. The outcomes of these meetings was that: there is no contradiction between IHL and sharia law; there is a need to increase efforts for protection/assistance; IHL is the reference point as a set of guiding principles for states. **Action: Ronald will send further information for the HF website.**

Strategic Plan

James presented the Strategic Plan that the Trustees had agreed in July. Ibrahim Hasaballa made the general challenge to **“keep the Humanitarian Forum name respectable, doing something big, about coordination not implementation”**.

In general discussion, the Strategic Plan was accepted with the following suggestions.

Improving quality

- Each pilot country should define its priorities and benchmarks, with guidance from HF London (Abdulwahab Noorwali)
- All In Diary is a useful training tool/guide (Khalid Diab)
- Measures of success could include the number of local NGOs that get funding on their own (Makki Mohamed) or join a cluster (Simon Springett)
- HF London can circulate members’ reports on emergencies (Huseyin Oruch)

Building bridges

- National forums should not implement relief activities, just coordinate them where there is a gap (Ibrahim Hasaballa)
- Their focus should be on capacity building and disaster preparedness (Khalid Diab)
- They can also improve the reputation of humanitarian aid/actors with the local community (Makki Mohamed).

Global network

- As the HF is still at an early stage, the SC should continue to meet every 6 months. We could consider extending one of the meetings into a larger annual congress.
- SC members should fund the local forums, introduce them to funders (Abdulwahab Noorwali), develop consortia with members of the local forums (Makki Mohamed).
- Local forums should speak again to the local offices of international funders (Simon Springett)

General

- For activities, focus on building bridges between international humanitarian actors and between local and international actors, to identify SMART activities for annual programmes (Makki Mohamed).
- Change the language from “might” to “will” (Simon Springett).

Action: James will incorporate these issues.

Saada emergency (Yemen)

Ronald said that the OIC has added Yemen to its key countries of concern, the ICRC has been involved in Yemen for several years, and that the Yemeni Red Crescent has set up an office in Sa’ada. With the escalation of fighting, expatriate staff have withdrawn to Sana’a.

Amal Saeed of UN OCHA said that the recent Flash Appeal, which included Al Islah and Al Saleh (Yemeni NGOs), was underfunded. The UN’s new relief corridor through Saudi Arabia will start operating soon.

Ahmad al Sharaji said that the current information is that:

- HF Yemen members operating in Sa’ada: Al Islah, Al Saleh, Yemeni Red Crescent
- HF Yemen has 3 other members operating outside Sa’ada
- HF international members operating in Sa’ada are: Islamic Relief, Oxfam and Qatar Red Crescent.

Action: Amal said that Al Islah and al Saleh and the Yemeni Red Crescent would be invited to coordination meetings in Yemen.

Action: Following Simon Springett’s suggestion, Ahmad al Sharaji will map which organizations are working in Sa’ada and what the partnerships are (eg Oxfam is using SOUL, which is a HFY member, as a partner). This could also be useful as preparedness for the anticipated problems in the South.

Action: Following Abdulwahab's suggestion for Yemen and Somalia, HF will develop a page on its website with information and projects, similar to the information for Gaza.

Next meeting

Dr Hany said that the next meeting will be 20-22 April 2010 and that members would be polled for their preferences. Suggestions are:

- Beirut, to discuss Gaza and the West Bank
- Amman, to discuss Iraq
- Islamabad, to discuss Pakistan
- Skopje, to develop ideas for HF Balkans

There were several ideas for a focus for the next meeting:

- Assess/measure pilot countries against metrics
- Links with Christian organizations
- Links with traditional and/or non-traditional donors

Participants

Name	Organisation
Whisnu Yonar Anggono	Humanitarian Forum Indonesia
Hening Parlan	Humanitarian Forum Indonesia
Dr Hany El-Banna	Humanitarian Forum (UK)
James Shaw-Hamilton	Humanitarian Forum (UK)
Shahira Maarouf	Humanitarian Forum (UK)
Saeed Ghaleed Naji Al- Kamel	Humanitarian Forum Yemen
Ahmad Al-Sharaji	Humanitarian Forum Yemen
Ronald Oferinger	International Committee of the Red Cross
Huseyin Oruc	IHH
Dr Ibrahim Hassaballah	International Islamic Charitable Organization
Makki Mohamed	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Matthew Lovick	Mercy Corps
Qurat Sadozai	Norwegian Refugee Council
Ambassador Ataa El-Manan Bakhit	Organization of the Islamic Conference
Saidi Kasajja	Organization of the Islamic Conference
Simon Springett	Oxfam
Rasheed Alaway	Qatar Charity
Khaled Diab	Qatar Red Crescent Society
Amal Saeed	UN OCHA
Dr Abdulwahab Noorwali	Worldwide Assembly of Muslim Youth
Irshad Ibrahim	WAMY
Dr. Mohamed Sheikh Ali	WAMY