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Conference Room Paper

Increased Involvement of Civil Society in the PCB

**Role of the Civil Society Communications and Consultation Facility
in supporting the PCB NGOs**

Document prepared by the PCB NGOs

BACKGROUND

1. In June 2007, the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board endorsed the establishment of an Independent Communication and Consultation Facility (CF) to strengthen NGO participation – and support enhanced incorporation of country-level civil society voices in PCB-related dialogue..
2. The CF is housed at World AIDS Campaign (WAC), and supported by WAC and Health Development Networks (HDN). The goal is *to enhance the effectiveness and accountability of the Delegation, and ensure transparency of information and the validity of representative voices through improving communications to and from the delegates with civil society.*
3. The CF has three key tasks to accomplish:
 - Meet the major administrative and logistic needs of the Delegation;
 - Address Delegation members' and stakeholders' communication needs; and
 - Achieve effective Delegation stakeholder outreach and management.
4. During the first six months, or start up phase, the CF identified the following key activities as the immediate focus of its work:
 - Basic organizational development, including guidelines on ways of working, work plan, budget, communication tools and fundraising proposal;
 - A consultation on the topic of 'meaningful participation of civil society' in time for the December 2008 PCB meeting;
 - A strategy retreat with other formal civil society Delegations, including the Global Fund Delegations, GAVI, UNITAID and the new IHP+;
 - The recruitment process of new delegates to be completed in time for participation in the December 2008 PCB meeting; and
 - Ongoing administrative work supporting the PCB NGO Delegation's communications and preparation for key meetings.
5. At this stage, these key activities have been completed, and the CF has established its presence by making contacts with partners in the PCB, at UNAIDS and within wider civil society. The work has progressed; relationship building is underway, and contacts within wider civil society are increasing. As this is the first time that a structure such as the CF has been tried, there are obviously aspects that need fine-tuning. For this reason, the work plan and priorities have been reviewed in our meetings just prior to the PCB

Detailed Project activities:

6. Immediately after the CF was awarded (April 2, 2008), the April PCB meeting in Chiang Mai was underway (week of April 21st). The CF hosts, World AIDS Campaign (WAC) and Health and Development Networks (HDN) and were both in attendance with CF staff (project manager and consultant with support from HDN staff) to support the facilitation and note-taking during the week, meeting some of the administrative needs of the Delegation. The CF was able to circulate a communiqué to civil society networks after the meeting.
7. Immediately following the meeting, a steering group and Delegation focal point were established for the CF, to work more closely on the work plan and

memorandum of understanding and try to resolve some basic ways of working. During the first six months, or start up phase, the CF identified the following key activities as the immediate focus of its work. Below is a description of work accomplished in relation to each activity.

1. Basic organizational development, including guidelines on ways of working, work plan, budget, and fundraising proposal

1.1 Work plan

8. In the first month of the CF, a work plan was developed by the CF program manager and in consultation with the Steering Committee of the Delegation, and sent to UNAIDS for approval. The plan is conceptualized as two main pillars of work: one internal to the Delegation itself and the other focused on external communications with PCB members and broader civil society (see Annex I for overview of the work plan).
9. The CF continues to be on track on the key activities in the work plan. One work plan activity that should be completed this year is the development of the International Resource Team. The terms of reference for this group are currently being reviewed by the Delegation for agreement and then the selection process can begin.

1.2 Fundraising and budget

10. The original concept note was developed in June 2008 to fundraise for the additional USD 500,000¹ needed over two years to support the CF. The concept note was updated in November and fundraising has been flagged as urgent in the six month review and report (see Annex 2 for updated proposal).

1.3 Ways of working

11. Basic ways of working amongst the Delegation consist of email and telephone communication in between meetings. The group is moving from a Google group to the People Connector (PCO) for email and document storage, and this will be evaluated in the next report.
12. As for telecommunications, the CF is using Skype and Genesys to hold calls. Genesys is not ideal for this group, as some countries where our delegates live are blocked. The service is also expensive. The CF has the greatest challenges reaching African countries and Kyrgyzstan. Skype is effective in northern or developed countries where internet access is not a problem, but less effective for our southern based delegates. In search of solutions, the CF has done extensive consultations with other INGOs around the challenges of doing internal communication between members in different regions.

1.4 Website and internal communications platform

13. The subcontract with INIS communications should be completed this year. The internal platform and public website are now complete. Initial use will lead to any necessary fine-tuning over the next couple of months. The first version of the site can be found at www.pcbngo.org.

¹ In addition to initial funding from UNAIDS of USD 500,000 for two years.

2. An immediate and thorough consultation on the topic of 'meaningful participation of civil society' in time for the December 2008 PCB meeting

14. The CF worked with an independent consultant (Sarah Middleton-Lee) to carry out a focused consultation on this topic for the December PCB meeting. The work was supported by the NGO Delegation and an external Advisory Group.² It was carried out using two methodologies:

- Interviews with 25 key stakeholders (from Member States, Co-Sponsoring Organisations, UNAIDS Secretariat and civil society); and
- E-consultation with wider civil society – facilitated by HDN and circulated via other civil society networks, such as WAC, Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, the Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+) and International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC).

15. The value of the work was not only in the recommendations themselves, but also in the process of consultation surrounding the work. The online consultation was greatly supported by HDN, and was translated into French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese.

3. A strategy retreat that will engage larger civil society and then focus on the PCB NGO Delegation

16. The idea of holding a retreat to look at the strategy development of the NGO Delegation, in relationship to other organized civil society Delegations, was raised early in the life of the CF. Other organized Delegations include the three Delegations of the Global Fund, GAVI, UNITAID, PCB NGO Delegation and the current civil society contacts within IHP+. At the same time, International Civil Society Support (ICSS) was discussing the organization of a similar retreat as part of the Free Space Process. The CF and ICSS combined the concept note to bring together the organized civil society Delegations and allow for time during the week for the NGO Delegation to meet separately.

17. The retreat was held in September 2008 in Amsterdam and combined new research/bigger picture items with the themes of accountability and communications, and specifically looked at potential areas of joint work amongst the Delegations. The break out session provided a time for these key civil society actors to meet over topics such as financing, the UNAIDS-Global Fund MOU, and communications. The communications focal points had the opportunity to talk about ways of working and begin to share information more consistently. The participants all agreed that the retreat was very productive and that coming together as this group at least once a year would be beneficial.

18. The final report is available upon request (due to size) from the CF. Next steps will focus on communications and delegate accountability through working groups. The CF and Delegation members plan to participate in the working groups and the next annual meeting.

² Jacqueline Wittebrood (ICSS), Carol Nyirenda (UNITAID civil society delegate), Kieran Dlay (ICASO), Odilon Cuzon (HDN), Prateek Suman (Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights).

4. The recruitment process of new delegates to be completed in time for participation in the December 2008 PCB meeting

19. There are four slots on the Delegation open as of next year: the two North American delegates (alternate and full delegate); the Latin American alternate delegate and the African alternate delegate. The nominated incoming delegates are :
 - Robert Carr, Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition
 - Evan Collins, Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN)
 - Alexandra Garita, IPPF/WHR International Planned Parenthood Federation, Western Hemisphere Region
 - Lydia Mungherera, The AIDS Support Organization (TASO)
20. The CF issued a call for candidates, vetted applications, developed an online scoring tool with Survey Monkey, and carried out interviews of the highest ranked candidates. Non-delegates from civil society participated in the scoring process, and one former delegate in the interview panel for North America. The four new delegates joined the Delegation for December orientation and the 23rd PCB meeting.
21. The recruitment process can be improved in the future, and hence a 'lessons learned' paper was developed to evaluate the experience for next year.

5. Ongoing administrative work supporting the PCB NGO Delegation's communications and preparation for key meetings

22. The ongoing administrative needs of the Delegation increase around PCB meetings and international conferences, such as the IAC held in Mexico and the UNGASS High Level meeting. The main role of the CF is to support PCB meetings, but there have already been other opportunities for the CF to fulfill its role in supporting the Delegation and in engaging wider civil society.
23. The CF supported the PCB NGO Delegation at the April and October PCB meetings by arranging the pre-meetings (amongst the Delegation, but also with PCB Chair and Secretariat), observer meetings, facilitating and taking notes where needed. As well, the CF developed and disseminated communiqués after each meeting designed to spread information on key issues emerging from the PCB. In the case of the October PCB, the CF had the support of partners, such as Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, to host the pre-meetings.
24. This year the program manager worked with the delegates attending the Mexico AIDS conference. The available delegates attending the Mexico conference took part in a series of meetings with Member States and AIDS Ambassadors arranged by the CF. This was a useful opportunity to raise some concerns about the thematic session of the December PCB, raise awareness of the CF, and lay the groundwork for the consultation on meaningful participation that was just being designed.
25. Another opportunity to support NGO Delegation engagement with wider civil society is the work around the UNAIDS Evaluation. While one delegate serves on that committee with UNAIDS, all of the permanent delegates were invited to take part in a stakeholder's workshop in Geneva in September. The CF supported the Delegation in hosting a pre-meeting with civil society and compiling points from

civil society on the inception report. The independent evaluation team has since followed up with the CF to talk through these points and to ask for recommendations of civil society organizations to meet in country during field visits.

Summary of Project outputs

- Workplan
- Fundraising concept notes
- PCB Communiques from April and October
- The paper on Meaningful participation for the December PCB
- Recruitment process and four new delegates
- Website and internal communications platform
- Strategy retreat with other key civil society delegations
- Accountability report from Mexico
- December orientation