

Minutes of the Advocacy Working Group (AWG) meeting

March 3, 2016 – 11:00 – 12 noon – WebEx video and audio conference

Attendees

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| 1. Rudelmar Bueno de Faria | World Council of Churches (moderator) |
| 2. Azza Karam | UNFPA – IATF-FBO |
| 3. Ruth Messinger | American Jewish World Service |
| 4. Fred Nyabera | Arigatou International End Child Poverty |
| 5. Lynnaia Main | The Episcopal Church – Global Relations Mission |
| 6. Garret Grigsby | Christian Connections for International Health |
| 7. Husna Parvin Ahmad | Global One 2015 |
| 8. Mohamed Ashmawey | Islamic Relief Worldwide |
| 9. Imrana Umar | International Interfaith Peace Corps |
| 10. Sadhvi Bhagawati | Global Interfaith WASH Alliance |
| 11. Genie Kagawa | NGO Committee on Spirituality |

Apologies

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| 1. Andrew Hasset | World Vision International |
| 2. Liberato Bautista | United Methodist Church -GBCS |
| 3. Joe Donnelly | Caritas Internationalis |
| 4. Adam Taylor | World Bank |

No response to the call

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| 1. Francisco Alvarez | Catholic Church of Ecuador |
| 2. Gabriel Salguero | National Latino Evangelical Coalition |

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introduction to New Members
2. Update on the Steering Committee Meeting's deliberations
3. Update on the recently created Partnership on Religions and Development (PARD)
4. Initial ideas for advocacy strategies (based on criteria for country engagement):

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO NEW MEMBERS

AWG Moderator Rudelmar (WCC) introduced the new member, Garret Grigsby, to the Advocacy Working Group as approved recently by the members. Mr. Garret Grigsby, Executive Director of the Christian Connections for International Health (CCIH), introduced his organization as a membership organization which recently celebrated its 20th Anniversary in promoting global health. There are 174 organization members composed of large, well-known NGOs, such as World Vision, as well as small non-profits. It also has 400 individual members. The organization makes connections through networking and dialogue, lends technical assistance in various countries, and carries out advocacy training.

UPDATE ON STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING'S DELIBERATIONS

Rudelmar (WCC) and Sadhvi (WASH Alliance) gave a brief update on the recent deliberations of the Moral Imperative Steering Committee Meeting which was held recently. There were reports from the three Working Group, Evidence, Collaboration and Advocacy.

The Evidence Working Group moderator, Jean Duff, reported on the work being done to put together a Guide of Excellence in tracking evidence of best practices and work of the FBOs. The guidelines will be a resource for FBOs to become skilled in tracking evidence, acquiring access to resources and availing of reports from experts who have best practice in this area. The Working Group provides practical insights on how people can use this guide. The Joint Learning Initiative has offered their website to host information for MI partners and to allow FBO partners to have access of these guidelines.

The Collaboration Working Group is working for the Terms of Reference for the Working Group, as well as the criteria for country level engagement. The country criteria is crucial, but it has not yet been finalized. There is discussion to have two categories for the criteria: political circumstances and the country's conditions and relationship to MI partners. One paradigm could be the work of FBOs in violent countries, and subsequent implementation of the FBO framework for action. Another suggestion might consider work in countries where FBOs are already working, or where there is a World Bank presence. There will be a meeting soon of the Working Group, and they will be finalizing their draft for the country engagement criteria.

The Advocacy Working Group is working on prioritizing the identification of the major role for the Working Group to play. Two proposals have been put forward: 1) Putting together the Advocacy Tool Kit; and 2) Developing moral arguments on specific issues contained in the SDGs.

The MI Steering Committee also discussed the topic of membership in the Working Groups. Many FBOs have shown interest to join the Working Groups. Some of the Working Groups put a cap of the number of 20 FBOs as members in a Working Group. Others would like the Working Groups to be more inclusive and not limit the number of members. It was decided that the Steering Committee Chairs will invite new FBOs to become members by sharing the Terms of Reference of the WGs. Rudelmar (WCC) reported that, as far as the Advocacy Working Group is concerned, if a person doesn't attend 3 consecutive meetings, they will no longer be members of the WG. We may need to revisit the criteria for membership of our Advocacy Working Group.

Another discussion topic of the Steering Committee, led by Adam Taylor (World Bank Group), concerned membership in the Moral Imperative Initiative (MI). Adam was invited to a regional meeting in Buenos Aires and has been approached by religious leaders in L.A. about membership in the MI. There are interested people wanting to know how to join the initiative, and it was proposed to have regional meetings to explain more of the work of the MI. Connection with the PARD is also important to avoid confusion for the FBOs. Similarly,

communications regarding the Humanitarian Summit in Turkey in May of 2016 should take place in a coordinated way.

Azza Karam (UN-IATF-FBO) responded that there would be a conference call with PARD to discuss common points and common messaging and how the messaging can be done to minimize confusion.

UPDATE ON PARTNERSHIP ON RELIGIONS AND DEVELOPMENT (PARD)

The AWG moderator reported on the meeting in Berlin. There were three meetings:

1) February 15th and 16th – Internal Meeting with Member States, UN Agencies and World Bank. Rudelmar (WCC), Jorn (Digny), Azza (IATF) and Adam (World Bank) were able to share information on the MI and DUF (Donor-UN-FBO) process, initiated by the GIZ colleagues; 2) Launching of the International Partnership on Religion and Development (PARD); 3) Partners for Change Meeting (International Partners).

The decisions emanating from PARD were:

1. Its **guiding principles** would be: acquisition of knowledge, sharing, learning exchange, capacity-building, openness and transparency, non-profit-making, taking responsibility for successes and failures, critical self-reflection, and building on institutions.
2. **Membership** is voluntary and open to all established and new bilateral donor countries and multilateral organizations. Non-governmental actors can become associated partners. Associated partners are non-governmental actors, including religious organizations (ROs/FBOs), foundations, academia and other networks and initiatives that make in-kind contributions (e.g. knowledge sharing), finance single activities and joint projects according to their capabilities and priority areas.
3. There are 6 **criteria** for the partnership:
 - a. Focus on issues relevant to Agenda 2030: development, humanitarian assistance, peace, interreligious dialogue
 - b. Commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights / Human Rights Standards, and to equality (i.e. women, indigenous people, marginalized groups)
 - c. Impartiality towards target groups
 - d. No proselytism with ODA or other public funds
 - e. Transparency and accountability
 - f. Check of track-record of intended associated partner and past working relationships with PaRD members

The PARD Secretariat is in Bonn, Germany, and serves to assist in the implementation of the annual working plan. Associate Members have an advisory role, with no decision-making authority. The Secretariat convenes annual meetings and offers logistical support. The first meeting of PARD will be in October/November 2016. Their new website is:

www.partner-religion-development.org

Dr. Mohamed (IRI) gave an additional report on the meeting in Berlin. He shared the good news - that he experienced organizations working hand-in-hand rather than in competition with each other, as was the experience of the past 15 years. Also, he feels a new perception towards FBOs and their role in advancing the SDGs, as they have the trust of the people, and are working at the grassroots level. He raised concerns that FBOs are not first class members, however the AWG moderator, Rudelmar, noted that membership is still in the defining stage, whether the members will be determined by geographical representation or diversity of religions.

INITIAL IDEAS FOR ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

The AWG moderator introduced the issue of implementation strategy and formulation of moral arguments for the MI. He clarified that the Steering Committee has not yet had discussion on implementation since the WGs are in their initial stages. The strategy for defining implementation and the moral arguments for the SDGs also depends on the criteria for country engagement. The book issued by the German Ministry called Voices of Religion can help the arguments. Umar (IIPC) felt that moral arguments coupled with evidence from Holy Books would be most effective.

The AWG moderator offered 2 options for our Working Group to handle the moral arguments: 1) set up a small group from the Advocacy WG to work on that; 2) produce a ½ page on moral arguments for the SDGs as a starting point for discussions. It was decided that the first option would be the best solution in order to ascertain what has been done and to come up with something new. Genie (vide-moderator) introduced work from experts in Europe who have already studied each SDG from a moral and ethical perspective. The AWG moderator put forward the action point that Genie would provide links or existing work already done to the FBO partners of MI, who would revise/augment the material. The AWG moderator stated that we should try to focus on the goals that we prioritized in the beginning, and then alter them after we will have defined the pilot countries' criteria for engagement. Member States could be informed at a later stage. Material or a fact sheet could be developed for the Member States.

The AWG Moderator deferred the discussion on the advocacy strategies due to the fact that the country criteria has not yet been defined. If there is no country criteria, engagement is not ready. He drew our attention to the "Getting to Know the SDGs" as a good guideline and basis for future discussions.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be in April and the AWR Moderator will identify the best time for the meeting through the Doodle website.

Notes by Genie Kagawa on March 9, 2016