

**GHDI – Fit for Purpose
towards its Second Decade.**

**For the consideration of the
GHDI High-Level meeting
Geneva, 18. July 2013**

**Copenhagen,
June 4, 2013.**

GHDI: “Fit for Purpose towards its Second Decade”.

10 years after a historic agreement among 17 of the most influential humanitarian actors to 23 principles for Good Humanitarian Donorship in Stockholm 2003, the GHD Initiative (GHDI) co-chairs decided to initiate an assessment of the forum with a view to its role for the future or “**making GHDI fit for purpose**”. The consultancy-led analysis prompted the GHDI members to agree on a “**refresh**” exercise facilitated by Denmark as one of the co-chairs.

A Working Group (WG) was created around 15 members volunteering to participate in this exercise. The present document reflects the agreements reached on the issues of “Mission Statement” as well as on “Governance, Organizing Principles and Support” which were subsequently discussed by the GHDI Plenary during its meeting on 22 May and endorsed at the GHDI High Level Meeting.

Mission Statement.

As the only "donors-only" platform for humanitarian action on implementation of the 23 GHD principles, donors perceive GHDI as an important instrument for improved coherence and coordination of operations in the humanitarian hotspots - as well as delivering strategic inputs into policy and decision-making. Best practice will also constitute the background for outreach to humanitarian partners – state and non-state – to improve partnerships for advancing principled humanitarian action.

On the road to a “refresh”, the GHDI members have agreed on the following *Mission Statement* for its future work:

GHDI strives to improve donor behavior to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of donors’ humanitarian action by promoting the 23 GHD principles on the international humanitarian agenda and by vigorously working for their implementation.

In particular, GHDI pursues its mission through:

- ***the development and dissemination of evidence-based best practice of donor behavior;***
- ***support to the development of peer-to-peer monitoring mechanisms of members' implementation of GHD principles;***
- ***outreach to partners – state and non-state - outside GHDI;***
- ***ensuring that the GHD principles are used as a point of departure for and reflected in international discussions and decisions on humanitarian actions, strategies and policies as well as enriching practice in field operations.***

Governance, Organizing Principles and Support.

Reflecting the GHDI purpose, ambition and level of complexity as defined in the above Mission Statement, the following principles for governance, organizing principles and support structure will guide GHDI's future work.

Governance:

Throughout its first decade, the GHDI was operating on the basis of rotating chairmanships elected for a year, normally co-chaired by two members of whom one was a long-standing humanitarian donor and the other a more recent member of the GHDI. The members volunteer for chair-service and dedicate Geneva-based staff to ensure the smooth running of GHDI.

The consultancy-led assessment of GHDI showed that members were generally happy with this arrangement that they consider maximizes buy-in and involvement from individual members. The inherent risks in this model stem from ensuring a continued supply of volunteers capable of spearheading the process and endowed with sufficient resources to drive an ambitious, complex and topical GHD-agenda as well as keeping the GHDI machinery agile and responsive.

Thus, the future governance structure for GHDI will **maintain a member-based chairmanship – hosted in Geneva – consisting of two co-chairs who are elected/confirmed by the GHDI membership for a period of one year at the annual High-level meeting in July.**

The role of the chairs will be to set the stage for the GHDI to pursue its mission, which shall include the following:

- To propose priority themes of direct relevance to the GHDI-mission and the areas of activities contained in the Mission Statement.
- To draft an annual work plan in consultation with the GHDI members, partnering in particular with the outgoing co-chairs.
- To facilitate implementation of the GHDI work plan, ensuring an overview of the work streams and liaison with ad-hoc donor sub-groups working on different GHD activities.
- To encourage that GHD-based local groups in the humanitarian hotspots are brought actively into the GHDI deliberations.
- To ensure that the relevance of new work stream proposals are screened and approved by GHDI-members.
- To facilitate the development and implementation of a peer-to-peer monitoring mechanism, in collaboration with OECD/DAC and/or other relevant external partners.

- To undertake stocktaking, and prepare the annual GHDI report towards the end of the twelve-month period.
- To organize, host, facilitate and record outcomes of GHDI meetings.
- To manage communication on behalf of the GHDI, including the circulation of information and updating of the website(s).
- To liaise, as appropriate, with external partners including global and regional entities such as IASC, ICRC, ICVA as well as non-GHDI donors.

The co-chairs play a facilitative role in ensuring the effective functioning of the GHDI. They do not act as formal spokespersons or representatives of the GHDI externally, unless the wider group has specifically mandated this. However, in order to ensure progress on the GHDI work plan and agenda, facilitate appropriate external input to GHDI meetings, explain the role and purpose of GHD, and to keep humanitarian partners informed of relevant developments relating to the GHDI work plan, the co-chairs will liaise, as appropriate, with partners in the humanitarian community, including non-GHDI donors.

Volunteers for co-chairing are identified at least six months in advance, if possible. Priority will be given to donors which have never chaired the group, or which have chaired the least in recent years. The incumbent co-chairs submit the candidates for future co-chairing to the GHDI for approval.

Starting immediately, the GHD co-chairs will develop and maintain a longer-term rolling plan with identified future co-chairs, allowing members to plan for chairmanship – in terms of workload and staffing – in an orderly manner.

While the strong preference of the GHD group is to maintain a co-chairing arrangement, a single donor may chair the group on an exceptional basis if no other volunteer is identified.

Organizing Principles:

In order to maximize the impact of GHDI's work, a number of organizing principles are clarified and updated as follows:

- *Work plans.*
To enhance its role in the global humanitarian community, GHDI will organise its work around a highly focused agenda with a direct bearing on the core elements of its mission, i.e. develop and disseminate best practice; peer-to-peer monitoring; outreach to partners outside GHDI; and preparing GHD relevant input to the relevant international discussions and decisions on humanitarian actions, strategies and policies as well as ensure a focus on field operations. The work plan needs to become multiannual to ensure continuity and an unwavering focus on the GHDI mission. In short, **the annual work plan will focus on few and central topics –**

s few as 2-3 per year - with a view to pursuing the GHDI mission.

At the same time, the work plan should allow for co-chairs and other GHDI members to bring emerging issues of relevance to GHDI into discussion, i.e. evolving humanitarian hotspots, events or topics of relevance to advocating the GHD principles, etc.

- *High-level meetings: contents, frequency and participation.*
High-level participation in annual meetings is a precondition for GHDI's ability to impact political and strategic decision-making of humanitarian donors. An indicator of GHDI's relevance will therefore also be its sustained ability to attract such participation. Thus, **members and chairs will strive to attract high-level participation both from Geneva and donor capitals in the annual meetings.**

Relevant approaches to facilitate this will include setting informal rules-of-engagement (Chatham House rules etc.) and ensuring that the agenda is result-oriented through including items for actual decision-making (i.e. approval of new GHDI guidelines, policy papers, work streams etc.). Further, and as a rule, High-Level meetings should be scheduled as side-events to major humanitarian conferences and normally only be called once a year to emphasize their executive character.

In order to facilitate effective meetings, the co-chairs undertake to circulate meeting agendas and, where possible, background documents at least two weeks in advance of meetings.

- *Hand-over procedures.*
Clear and explicit procedures for handover are important to ensure continuity of discussions. Procedures will be built around principles similar to the "troika" procedure used by the ODSG. Thus, incoming co-chairs will present the work plan for the coming year based on consultations with the outgoing co-chairs and **handover between chairs will take place – in accordance with such agreed-upon procedures – at latest in early September.**

- *Work streams.*

As reflected in the overall ambition to achieve a more focused and influential GHDI, the work streams need to address issues that are central to collective humanitarian donor action at a level, which attracts and commits the members.

To ensure this, proposals regarding new work streams are to be scrutinized and approved by the plenary meeting based on the following criteria:

- Work streams should focus on fewer and higher-end topics that advance the GHD principles.
- They are to be clear on objectives, timeline, concrete outputs and the eventual broader usage of such results. Also, they should be defined in terms of estimated duration of their operation.

In addition, the following considerations apply:

- The lead country assumes full responsibility for logistical and substantive facilitation of the work-stream.
 - The lead country is responsible for the development of work plans with clear indications of requirements for inputs and expected deliverables.
 - Participants in work streams should use all possible means towards involving relevant staff, including both decision makers and specialists as appropriate, from donor capitals and research communities.
 - Information regarding past and current undertakings by work streams will not necessarily be provided during plenary meetings, but will be uploaded on the GHD web page (members' area) or circulated to the GHDI by email.
 - It could be considered to develop formats for a set of standard outputs from work streams - i.e. guidelines, policy recommendations, best practices and case stories.
- *Location.*
Geneva continues to be the hub for GHDI due to the concentration of UN-agencies and civil society organizations dedicated to humanitarian issues and the resulting concentration of missions and staff with humanitarian knowledge and dedication among GHDI members.

In order to emphasize the importance of GHDI's link to operational issues in the field, it would be important to actively include relevant local donor groups – i.e. the one in DRC and similar groups in other locations – in the provision of inputs to GHD discussions in work streams and other fora.

Based on the experience from the first decade, there seems to be only a marginal value in maintaining hubs in Rome and New York since they have been only intermittently active and have seemingly not routinely dealt with issues agreed in the annual GHDI work plans. This is reflected in a lack of systematic reporting back into the High-level meetings. Thus, **Geneva will be the centre for the GHD and the GHDI as such will be discontinued in Rome and New York.**

This does not mean that donors should not have coordination mechanisms in these and other locations but such mechanisms should not be expected

to regularly report back to GHDI. Likewise, the co-chairs should not be tasked with systematic reporting and information gathering from them.

Support structure:

The need for secretariat support is obviously a function of the complexity and ambition of GHDI as well as the capacity dedicated by the co-chairs to tasks such as overall facilitation, web site content and maintenance, meeting logistics (agendas, documentation, logistics), circulation and posting of meeting conclusions. Also, with the added emphasis on donor behaviour and outreach linked to the GHD principles, new substantive tasks are being added to the role of the co-chairs.

No matter the model chosen, the principle of an informal, non-bureaucratic and low-cost GHDI should be maintained. However, based on needs, the GHDI will pilot new support modalities in order to assess whether these could help the GHDI in pursuing its mission.

In particular, when it comes to the added emphasis on peer-to-peer monitoring and evidence-based best practices it is important to ensure support from individuals/entities with accumulated experience and authoritative standing like OECD/DAC. To alleviate workload concerns particularly among smaller and more recent GHDI members, at least initially they can avail themselves of an "opt-out clause" delaying their participation until they are ready.

However, lessons learned from the implementation of the GHD Principles through a comprehensive and credible monitoring could become a substantive contribution from the GHDI to the upcoming Humanitarian Summit with its focus on aid effectiveness.

In more general terms, it may be that the need for support is more pronounced throughout a transition period while the agreed-upon framework for a "refreshed" GHDI is being implemented and then tapering off once a new routine is established within the next few years.

In this respect and to keep the momentum for the "refresh", Denmark has offered to co-finance an interim support structure for a period carrying GHDI beyond the World Humanitarian Summit. It is estimated that it would require 2-3 other members to make this arrangement operative for the indicated period.