

Executive Committee Teleconference - Minutes

Thursday, December 13, 2018 9:00am-11.30am EST

Participants

Executive Committee Members: Nancy Smyth (Canada/Ministry of Global Affairs - Chair), Yasmine Sherif (ECW Director), Alicia Herbert (UK DFID), Rudolf Huber (Germany BMZ), Nina Papadopoulos (USAID), Justin van Fleet (Office of the UN Special Envoy for Global Education), Eline Ruisendaal (Netherlands), Joseph O'Reilly (SCF), Ben Sadek (Plan International), Dean Brooks (INEE), Maria Agnese Giordano (Global Education Cluster)

Apologies: Jo Bourne (UNICEF), Margriet Schreuders (Dutch Postcode Lotterij), Anna Rosendahl (SIDA), Jamie Saavedra (World Bank Group), Pdraig Power (GPE), Thomas Ostermann (Denmark)

Observers: Alice Birnbaum, (Canada), Zhara Boudhwani (Canada), Stijn De-Lameillieure (European Commission), Ashley Henderson (USAID), Kelly Loewer (US State Department/PRM), Emily Todd (DFID), Alice Kunz (GIZ), Randi Gramshaug (NORAD), Ita Sheehy (UNHCR), Dina, N. Abu-Ghaida (World Bank Group), Niklas Borker Bjerre (Denmark), Nilse Ryman (GPE)

ECW Secretariat: Zeinab Adam, Nasser Faqih, David Hartstone, John Solecki, Johannes Kiess, Graham Lang, Anouk Desgroseilliers, Emily Travis, Niladri Bhattacharjee, Michael Corlin, Dagmar Kunzmann Briefel

Welcome and Roll Call

The Chair opened the meeting and thanked everyone for their active participation at the retreat in early November and the facilitators for sharing the retreat report. Thanking HLSG, ExCom, the Director and the Secretariat, she highlighted that there was good reason to celebrate all the accomplishments this year.

1. ExCom Retreat

- The Chair recapped the retreat and noted that the facilitators captured a lot, particularly in their notes in the annexes, as a raw consolidation of the issues discussed in the working groups. The report could use some fine tuning in terms of language so that it can be read easily by anyone who is not familiar with the addressed issues. She invited ExCom to send any specific comments that were not captured in the report to the Chair and the Director, who will then finalize the report. The goal of the consolidated report is to capture the emerging consensus and clearly define the next steps. The report serves as a reference for the forthcoming work on the operations manual. The work is estimated to be completed by Q2.
- The Chair opened the floor for discussion:
- DFID underlined that ExCom had a good retreat but that the facilitation did not provide guidance. DFID suggested acknowledging the report as is, including an outline of the secretariat's and task teams' next steps and timeframe.
- USAID echoed DFID's comments and stated that they are eager to move forward.
- GPE noted that they provided written feedback to ECW and underlined the importance of clarifying the cooperation between GPE and ECW.
- The Director agreed with the Chair that the retreat report will serve as a blueprint for follow up action and that it was important to finalize. She provided an update on the four outcomes: (1) Governance and Operational module alignment: the secretariat will convene the task team in January to begin the process and do the preparatory paperwork for a firm to support; (2) discussions with FSO had commenced; (3) Discussions had commenced with civil society to follow-

up on replenishment; and, (4) the Secretariat had completed its staffing requirements for approval by EXCOM.

- With respect to the GPE inputs, ECW had amended accordingly. As for the ECW-GPE cooperation, this had not been discussed at the retreat, but ECW was looking forward to engage in these discussions, suggesting that IFFED also be included, to map financing architecture.
- The Chair replied that the retreat planning working group was aware of the importance of the GPE-ECW complementarity, but decided that, due to time constraints and the focus on operations/governance, it would be better if this discussion took place separately in due course, given the evolving discussions between GPE, ECW and IFFEd. Thus there is no specific reference in the report to the relationship between GPE and ECW.
- **Action: The Chair and Director to finalize the report by December 14 and resubmit it to ExCom for comments by December 20.**

2. CAR Multi-Year Resilience Programme

- The Chair informed that UNHCR and UNICEF are the grant agents of this MYRP. While staying on the call, they will not participate in the discussion, due to potential Col.
- The Director reiterated that CAR counts as a forgotten crisis and is thus a priority for ECW, and approved as such in the ECW Strategic Plan. She underlined that she was mindful of the fact that some ExCom members would like more work to be done and that the secretariat is thus keen to consolidate these comments in order for everyone to stand behind the MYRP in CAR. The secretariat had put this proposal forward, as next EXCOM would not take place until February 13 2019, while the First Emergency Response (FER) concluded in November 2018. It was due to this gap.
- The Secretariat summarized the following four points:
 - CAR had a first response of USD 6 million, implemented by four organizations. All of the FER programs expired in November 2018. In a timely manner, the FER response was transformed into a MYRP.
 - Government involvement was substantial in the process. Some capacity constraints need to be acknowledged but overall government ownership is encouraging.
 - The Cluster has outlined who does what on the ground and identified partners.
 - The review process involved the Secretariat, the field and the Interim Review Panel. The feedback matrix shows that some issues have been explained and others needed to be reflected upon in the report. Some explanation might not have been sufficient, but due to the time constraints and the short turnaround to comment on all questions, this proved challenging.
- The Secretariat acknowledged that further justification is needed on the budget and on accountability and suggested that ExCom considers approval of funding pending further clarification on outstanding issues.
- The EC, as a member of the review panel, confirmed that overall the feedback had been taken into account and supported approval of the MYRP on the condition that certain issues still needed attention, for example on policy dialogue with the government and on quality of learning. The EC would be ready to review the next version.
- USAID noted that the turnaround for comments was too short and they did not have time to review.

- Denmark noted that the program overall seemed solid and that it was encouraging to see the strong focus on girls. Further information was sought on the important aspect of school feeding in relation to girls' education.
- Denmark further acknowledged that the extremely difficult environment would require regular realignment with donor expectations. The high funding expectations would need to be addressed in more detail but overall supported moving forward with the proposal.
- Norway reiterated that it would appreciate more time for review and echoed the comments regarding quality of education and would like to see more detail on disability and how attacks on schools are being addressed. A clear exit strategy is missing regarding teacher incentives. Norway would further like to see more detail on how the four grantees would complement each other.
- DFID said it was willing to approve CAR in principle and stressed that CAR was a priority for them.
- DIFD had also been involved in the review process and appreciates the results, given the timeline has been so tight, and thus suggested to approve the MYRP in principal, on the condition that no funds will be disbursed until outstanding issues have been fully addressed and the Interim Review Panel completed another round of review.
- The UN Special Envoys' Office underlined its appreciation to see pre-primary education included in the MYRP.
- Germany confirmed that it agrees approving in principal and would like to know more about complementarity and cooperation with other programs and the Aid Cluster. This applies for all MYRPs.
- GPE advised that GPE had approved USD 6.3 million funding to CAR through its acceleration funding and this needed further clarification on complementarity from ECW. GPE will provide its feedback in writing.
- The Secretariat confirmed it had taken note of all the comments. Further information on overall funding will be provided in the revision.
- The Director appreciated the support by EXCOM, as this will give the colleagues on ground the incentive to finalize the document. In regard to the funding target for CAR, she explained that the MYRP is both a program and resource mobilization tool in-country to align further funding behind MYRPs, which serve to bridge humanitarian and development (the nexus) efforts. Lessons learned show that one can increase resources at all levels by providing a detailed programme for a given country that enjoys in-country ownership. It also opened up for funding from donors unable to invest in HQ-based trust funds or pooled funds. For ECHO, a MYRP is a good vehicle for funding as they cannot provide funding to the ECW Global Trust Fund.
- The Chair underlined the imperative of urgency but was appreciative of the need for more time to review. She confirmed that the comments from the Review Panel (including DFID, Canada, EC, UNICEF and UNHCR) were very much in line.
- The Secretariat recapped the process since the July ExCom meeting when the issue of the Review Panel was on the agenda. ExCom decided to establish an Interim Review Panel consisting of ExCom members and asked a task team to come up with options for a permanent review panel. A report is currently drafted and will be presented at the 13th February ExCom meeting.
- **Action: ExCom approved the MYRP in principal, with the condition that outstanding questions raised at the meeting will be addressed by CAR within one month. ExCom was encouraged to submit final comments in writing to ECW by December 19. A final round of review will be undertaken by the Interim Review Panel upon re-submission of the MYRP. ExCom will be**

notified of final review by email by the Interim Review Panel. No financial disbursements will be undertaken until final notification to ExCom of approval by the Interim Review Panel.

3. Reprogramming Yemen

- The Director alerted ExCom of capacity issues on the ground in Yemen and the way the program was originally designed. With the commencement of the peace talks and the new government in place, ECW saw possibilities to realign the programme, and has worked with GPE to address capacity issues and realignment.
- The Secretariat further explained that partners have not been able to deliver as outlined in the program proposal due to the complex situation on the ground, including capacity issues, security issues, political interference and the changing needs of the beneficiaries. The secretariat underlined that incentives are not the same as salaries and are not sustainable, nevertheless they are essential in the current situation for the schools to function. Through the program, teacher incentives of USD 50/month would be paid over a period of nine months.
- The Chair confirmed the complexity of the situation and acknowledged the Director's concern.
- Germany had no objection to the reprogramming request and confirmed that the local education group was included in the coordinated approach to reprogram the Initial Investment.
- GPE noted concerns that UNESCO and the government were not sufficiently informed about the reprogramming request and that there are some discrepancies on data. GPE further asked to see the annexes to the request which were not submitted with the background papers and informed that more detailed written feedback will follow after the meeting. The Secretariat confirmed that it will submit the annexes by email following the meeting.
- Norway had no objection but inquired whether the level of pay would be the same for the North and the South and queried how the 90% of the required incentives will be covered, given that ECW will cover 10% of total need.
- The EC had no objection but voiced concerns from the field regarding the USD 7 million that will be used to pay incentives. The EC further wanted to see the issue of quality of learning addressed in more detail.
- DFID agreed with colleagues and alerted ExCom that it will send comments from the team in Yemen shortly. DFID needed to ensure complementarity with its approach in Yemen before it would be in the position to confirm no-objection.
- Denmark confirmed no-objection but also raised concerns on quality and financing of incentives in general.
- The Secretariat confirmed that discussions with GPE and UNESCO had been ongoing over the past two months and that the request followed recommendations from these partners on the ground. The Secretariat further clarified that this program is only for the North and that salaries continue to be paid in the South. On quality, the Secretariat would appreciate more detailed questions from ExCom to relay to UNICEF in Yemen.
- The Chair summarized that there was consensus moving forward with the request, pending DFID confirmation, and noted the concerns regarding quality and sustainability of incentives.
- **Action: ExCom supports the approval of the reprogramming. ExCom to send more detailed queries to the Secretariat for further deliberation by the implementing partners in Yemen. DFID will submit its update from the field as soon as possible and advise ExCom. Once comments**

incorporated and/or addressed and DFID's advice received, the proposal will be re-circulated for a final no-objection.

4. MYRPs for Iraq and Pakistan

- The Chair advised ExCom that she had received correspondence from the HLSG Chair, and discussed with the Director, suggesting the consideration of adding a Pakistan MYRP alongside the MYRP in Afghanistan, given the cross-border nature. The HLSG Chair had also been approached to consider the Iraq MYRP in view of the efforts to rebuild Mosul and other parts of the country.
- The Director emphasized that these were emanating from governments. In Pakistan, where many children live in violent environments along the Waziristan border to Afghanistan, the MYRP would also prove supportive to efforts enhance peace and stability. The MYRP in Iraq would add to the regional dimension of ECW programs in the Middle East and would address the needs of millions of children and youth previously living under ISIL/ISIS control.
- **Action: MYRPs for Iraq and Pakistan will be an item on the agenda at the in-person ExCom meeting on 13 February.**

5. ECW Staffing Requirement

- The Chair introduced the item and underlined that ExCom would be interested to see ratios of salaries to overall funds.
- The Director explained that the staffing requirements were prepared carefully during the staff retreat in view of the Strategic Plan and lessons learned over the past 18 months. The proposed staffing outlined the minimum requirements of staff to reach the targets in the Strategic Plan 2018-2021. This entailed the need to increase capacity for internal oversight of the fund, advocacy and resource mobilization as recommended by the Mokoro team, capacity to address the Nexus, quality education and the Theory of Change, as well as monitoring and reporting. The Director recapped the outlined needs and underlined that the Secretariat would remain a low cost entity at about 6.6%. She further emphasized that the staffing requirements were developed with a holistic approach, considering staff health and well-being, as staff were double-hatting and relied on short-term consultants. Rather than continue requesting staff from EXCOM on an ad hoc basis, it had been recommended that a more comprehensive staffing requirement for the Strategic Plan period 2018-2021 be presented to EXCOM for approval.
- The Chair reminded everyone that the secretariat had indeed been requested to provide a comprehensive staffing requirement and opened the floor for comments.
- The Special Envoy for Education's Office noted that the plan seemed reasonable to reach the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan, and that he trusted the Director's recommendation.
- The Netherlands echoed that the plan seemed reasonable but cautioned against building a secretariat in Geneva.
- Norway understood the need for increased staff but felt that there was not enough information and overview provided in the background note to fully inform ExCom.
- DFID noted that the staff descriptions seemed sensible and further asked to see an organizational chart and budget along with the proposed staffing requirements; how FSO services were factored in and how the new staff would make a significant difference.

- USAID applauded ECW for providing the overview of staffing requirements and suggested considering more technical expertise on education and the position of a deputy.
- The EC was generally supportive of the request but needed to see more in-depth analysis, particularly in terms of services FSO could provide in terms of risk.
- Denmark underlined that a reasonable increase in staff would be fine, totaling no more than 5-7% of total costs and asked for more information on staffing at the technical level. Denmark was concerned that the presence in Geneva might not significantly add to the expertise needed in New York and asked ECW to elaborate whether this is the last staffing request submitted to ExCom during the current Strategic Plan.
- Canada would like to see a senior position on finance and grant oversight and suggested that the secretariat submitted the annual workplan and annual budget with the proposed positions included.
- The Director thanked ExCom for their support and confirmed that the Secretariat will recirculate the organigram and provide more financial analysis. She assured ExCom that the presence in Geneva would be cost-effective through co-location and only a small fraction of the new positions would be in Geneva. This included humanitarian donor relations to access humanitarian funding, and emergency education field advisors to cost-effectively deploy to the field. She emphasized that it was important for the secretariat to have the budget approved by the end of 2018 to guarantee that salaries and operational expenses can be paid in January of 2019. Last year, the late approval end of January had caused complications. *[Since then, the Director negotiated with UNICEF FSO to extend deadline to early January, allowing EXCOM to meet once more on 11 January to approve the budget. This is the final deadline for approval to prevent complications for ECW and the host].*
- **Action: ECW to resubmit the proposed organigram, the 2019 work plan and Secretariat budget with additional information on the new posts and further information on FSO services. An ExCom call will be scheduled on January 11 to approve the 2019 ECW Secretariat budget, including staffing, and work plan.**

6. Calendar Dates and Benchmarks

- The Chair summarized the dates and benchmarks provided and suggested adding a line on the work plan to be approved by early December next year.

7. AOB and Close

- The Chair made reference to the GPE Board document on GPE's operating Principles in Complex Emergencies discussed and adopted by GPE's Board, and suggested sharing this with ExCom.
- Regarding the FER proposal on Greece, the Chair noted the difficulties donors are facing as Greece is not an ODA country. She suggested that the Secretariat look into further options on how to fund the proposal.
- The Chair reiterated Canada's contribution of USD-CAD 50 million over 3 years that was announced last week by Prime Minister Trudeau.
- The Director thanked Canada, Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, Norway and Dubai Cares for their generous contributions during 2018.

Summary of actions and next steps

1. The Chair and Director to finalize the retreat report by December 14 and resubmit it to ExCom for their comments by December 20.
2. ExCom approved the MYRP CAR in principal, with the condition that outstanding questions that were raised at the meeting will be addressed by CAR within one month. ExCom was encouraged to submit final comments in writing to ECW by December 19. A final round of review will be undertaken by the Interim Review Panel upon re-submission of the MYRP. ExCom will be notified by email of final approval by the Interim Review Panel. No financial disbursements will be undertaken until final notification to ExCom of approval by the Interim Review Panel.
3. ExCom supports the approval of the reprogramming. ExCom to send more detailed queries to the secretariat for further deliberation by the implementing partners in Yemen. DFID will submit its update from the field as soon as possible and advise ExCom. Once comments incorporated and/or addressed and DFID's advice received, the proposal will be re-circulated for a final no-objection.
4. Agenda items for the next face to face meeting on 13 February include:
 - a. Decision on the Review Panel
 - b. Possible MYRP Iraq and Pakistan
5. ECW to submit the proposed organigram, the 2019 work plan and secretariat budget with further information on FSO services. An ExCom call will be scheduled [on 11 January] for approval of the Secretariat budget, including the staffing requirements, and work plan.
6. An updated Calendar and Benchmarks document will be circulated with the minutes.
7. The next in-person meeting will take place on 13 February in Stockholm.