

**AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition
Planning Meeting V**
June 9, 2008
Washington, DC

Meeting Report

Welcome and Introductions

Mona Younis (AAAS Science and Human Rights Program)

Mona welcomed everyone to the fifth Science and Human Rights Coalition planning meeting and gave a brief overview of the AAAS Science and Human Rights Program's (SHRP) four core programs. She explained that the Coalition is SHRP's largest initiative within the first core program, which is focused on creating opportunities for scientists and scientific associations to contribute to human rights.

Mona then provided some background for first-time participants (for further background on the Coalition, see the December 10 planning meeting notes). The idea of a coalition was first introduced at a two-day conference held in 2005. Last year, SHRP determined that fewer than 10% of the 262 associations affiliated with AAAS had human rights committees or sections, notwithstanding the growing need for scientists from all disciplines to contribute to human rights. As a result, the Program decided to revive the idea of a coalition and convened the first planning meeting for that purpose in June. SHRP began by inviting those associations that had attended the 2005 conference. There were a number of reasons for this, including the fear of raising expectations yet again, and the need to keep the meetings small enough to function as working meetings. Through a collaborative process over the course of a series of planning meetings, participants have helped to establish the foundations for the Coalition, in preparation for the launch in January 2009.

Mona explained that facilitation of planning meetings is rotated in order to share the responsibility. She thanked Rob Albro (*American Anthropological Association*) for agreeing to facilitate this meeting and invited a volunteer for the next and final meeting ahead of the launch in January 2009.

Meeting Objectives

Rob Albro (American Anthropological Association)

Rob began with a brief reminder of what had been accomplished at the previous planning meeting on March 3rd with respect to the Coalition's five proposed areas of activity. During the previous meeting, participants had discussed the recommendations for three areas: (I) Welfare of Scientists, (II) Science Ethics and Human Rights, and (IV) Service to the Human Rights Community. The first goal of the June meeting, therefore, was to consider the statements drafted by the committees responsible for the two remaining areas of activity: (III) Service to the Scientific Community and (V) Information Materials.

Rob reminded participants that the areas of activity documents are designed to: (1) get us started on the work of the Coalition, so we can demonstrate progress in the period between now and the Coalition's official launch in January 2009; and (2) provide participants at the Launch the rationale, objectives, and content of the Coalition's intended areas of work. The documents will also form the basis for presentations to be given by each committee during the Launch, with the aim of eliciting interest in and committee members for the activities of the Coalition moving forward. Rob then turned to the present concerns, which were to evaluate the two remaining statements and provide the respective committees with productive feedback and suggestions for final revisions and to help generate specific next steps for each area.

The agenda included three additional items for consideration, which Rob briefly reviewed: membership statement, plans for the outreach event in October, and the Launch in January.

Area of Activity III: Service to the Scientific Community

Molly Brown (*Association of American Geographers*) and Brad Miller (*American Chemical Society*)

Brad introduced the draft document that he and Molly had prepared on Service to the Scientific Community. Participants provided comments on the document (revised version attached). Next steps to be accomplished within the coming six months were also agreed to as set out below.

Brad began by pointing out that it would be important to restate the objectives in terms of measurable outcomes to be achieved within a specific timeframe. It was explained that the need for such measurable outcomes applies to all Areas of Activity and will be included in the draft Plan of Action in the form of benchmarks. It was also suggested that more generally, baseline information should be collected on relevant areas of Coalition work, for example, on how many associations have human rights committees, and how many send out communications on behalf of scientists under threat.

Further Substantive Comments and Suggestions:

- Acknowledge in the rationale that some scientific associations are already highly involved in addressing human rights, while recognizing that there is potential for much more work to be done (reverse the order of the first two sentences).
- Specify that the human rights that may apply to the work of scientific associations are all the rights recognized in the international human rights framework -- both civil and political, as well as economic, social and cultural rights.
- Consider the need to clarify that an objective of this area of activity is to raise interest in human rights among scientific associations that have no interest in joining the Coalition, but want to know about human rights.
- Clarify that the human rights modules are intended to be "instructional" modules.

- Add reference to the potential for scientific associations to work between and amongst themselves, rather than simply in a bi-lateral relationship with the Coalition.

Next Steps:

- Identify and document the human rights activities carried out by scientific associations and make the findings available (e.g., a clearinghouse);
- Assess the needs of scientific associations in detecting and addressing human rights issues, bringing science to human rights problems and providing training in human rights, starting with associations that are currently involved or are interested in becoming involved with the Coalition; and
- Develop a strategy for involving scientific associations in the work of this area of activity that addresses the range of associations, from those highly involved in human rights work, to those with no involvement to date.

Area of Activity V: Information Materials

Judith Blau (*Sociologists Without Borders*) and Julie Mertus (*International Studies Association*)

John King (*International Studies Association*) introduced the draft document that Judith and Julie had prepared on Information Materials. Participants provided comments on the document (revised version attached). Next steps to be accomplished within the coming six months were also agreed to as set out below.

Substantive Comments and Suggestions:

- Change title of the area of activity to better reflect the full range of materials and objectives called for in the rationale, including bridging the scientific and human rights communities. Suggestions for consideration included *Filling in the Information Gaps*, *Information Resources*, and *Linking Materials*.
- Delete the first two sentences of the rationale and change the new first sentence to read, “To encourage and facilitate efforts to bridge the scientific and human rights communities, the Coalition will need to identify, compile and develop resources and create opportunities for exchange to establish a stronger foundation for productive, collaborative work on human rights.”
- Move to the “Objectives” the new second sentence, beginning “To this end . . .”
- Avoid the use of “misconceptions” and focus instead on “education” and outreach.

Next Steps:

- Gather case studies of successful collaboration between scientists from a variety of disciplines and human rights practitioners that cover both economic, social, and cultural rights work as well as civil and political rights (John King will be the point-person to receive and compile case studies);

- Create a short PowerPoint presentation (15-20minutes) in the next six months that includes short and compelling examples of how scientists and human rights activists have worked together in the past to successfully further human rights;
- Develop an initial information piece on the connections between human rights and science for the Launch.

Membership Statement

Paula Skedsvold (*American Educational Research Association*)

Paula introduced the draft document that she and Mona had prepared on Membership. Participants provided comments on the document. Roberta Spalter-Roth (*American Sociological Association*) agreed to work with Paula to revise the document in light of these comments (revised version attached).

Substantive Comments and Suggestions:

- Add “public health practitioners” to list of eligible professional societies.
- Consider adding the category of “affiliated societies” for those that are not yet ready to become official members.
- Add a statement about eligibility of all associations to join, regardless of level of current involvement or experience with human rights.
- Spell out that it is not necessary for an association to be affiliated with AAAS in order to be a member of the Coalition.
- Clarify that affiliated individuals and associations (not “full” members) are still able to receive information from and about the Coalition.
- Unpack the “How We Operate” section to clarify and emphasize representation.
- The “How We Operate” section needs to make more explicit the role and responsibilities of Coalition members.
- Under “Affiliated Scientists [and Associations]” make explicit the role and responsibilities of affiliated members.
- Add general reference in the introductory paragraph to the potential role and involvement of individual scientists in the Coalition.
- Membership needs to reflect the potentially varied levels of commitment and participation to which scientific associations may agree to be bound.
- Consider creating two categories of members to distinguish between associations’ “levels” of commitment to or adoption of human rights. For example, we could distinguish between associations that are exploring the possibility of engaging in human rights more formally, from those that have adopted a resolution or declaration affirming their association’s commitment to human rights. [For clarification: It would be up to each association to decide how they would relate to the Coalition and at what level e.g., executive, committee, or individual. That said, one reason for possibly differentiating, would be to provide special recognition of those associations that demonstrate an association-wide commitment or engagement with human rights, thereby encouraging other associations to do the same. Membership roles and responsibilities would be the same regardless of category.].

- Clearly identify the differences between affiliation, participation, membership, and representation.

Outreach Event and Coalition Launch

Mona Younis (AAAS Science and Human Rights Program)

Mona presented for review and discussion draft programs for two Coalition events: a “pre-launch, outreach event” that is being organized by the Service to the Human Rights Community committee; and the program for the Coalition Launch to be held on January 14-16, 2009.

Outreach Event, October (date to be decided)

At the last planning meeting, the Service to the Human Rights Community committee, co-chaired by Susan Hinkins (*American Statistical Society*) and Hormuzd Katki (*Washington Statistical Society*), committed to three “next steps,” one of which was an “outreach event” ahead of the Launch in January. As discussed at the meeting, the aim of the event is to: 1) announce to the human rights community the formation of the Coalition and its objective to bring scientists to human rights work; 2) begin establishing channels for ongoing communication; and 3) begin identifying specific contributions the Coalition might make to human rights efforts. A program was drafted and shared with the Washington Statistical Society which will be co-hosting the event with the Coalition. The program is intended to highlight the value of partnerships between scientists and human rights practitioners, by spotlighting three teams that have worked successfully together on a human rights project. According to the program, the six presenters would be interviewed about their experience working together, the challenges they confronted, and the like.

Substantive Comments and Suggestions:

- Consider whether, in its current form, the proposed program is both too long and too involved to attract large numbers of human rights practitioners in the Washington, DC area. [It was subsequently decided that SHRP would solicit feedback on the program design from members of the human rights community.]
- Consider a "webinar" or web casting of the outreach event.
- Event communications should be re-framed to speak directly to the needs of the human rights community, as opposed to trying to speak to both human rights groups and scientists; address human rights practitioners as if they were “potential clients.”
- Develop an on-line invitation that includes a brief survey (only a few questions) to gauge human rights organizations’ involvement with the scientific community, and as a means of generating interest in the event.
- Conduct a brief survey of organizations that attend the event but who are not able to remain for the entire program as a means of identifying channels for ongoing communication with human rights groups.

- Decide the date of the event and a recommendation for the third “team” of presenters via e-mail.

Launch, January 14-16, 2009

Participants reviewed a draft of the program for the Launch, which had been prepared by SHRP and reviewed and refined by the Launch Committee: Clinton Anderson (*American Psychological Association*), Brian Estes (*American Anthropological Association*), Rachel Franklin (*Association of American Geographers*), Susan Hinkins (*American Statistical Society*), and Paula Skedsvold (*American Educational Research Association*). Mona noted that the biggest challenge will be, in the coming six months, to reach and enlist the participation of a large number of scientific associations, professional societies, and science academies.

Substantive Comments and Suggestions:

- Invite executive directors of the target organizations and associations directly.
- Post a “save the date” or invitation to listservs that reach executive directors of scientific associations more broadly.
- Coalition members will post the announcement to various forums and blogs in which they participate.
- Arthur Kendall (*Capital Area Social Psychological Association*) and Rob Albro (*American Anthropological Association*) will join the Launch Committee.

Next Steps

- Next and final planning meeting will be held on: **Monday, September 15, 8:45-1:00pm** at AAAS in Washington, DC
- At that meeting, the following will be covered:

Coalition Organizational Model - Recommendation

Rob Albro (*American Anthropological Association*) and Bahram Rajaei (*American Political Science Association*)

Final Review of Foundational Documents

(presenter to be announced)

Draft Plan of Action (2009-2011)

(presenter to be announced)

Report on science and human rights organizations

Clinton Anderson (*American Psychological Association*)

Coalition Launch
(presenter to be announced)

Attachment #1: Area of Activity III: Service to the Scientific Community
Attachment #2: Area of Activity V: Information Resources
Attachment #3: Membership Statement

Area of Activity III: Service to the Scientific Community

Rationale

The scientific community has the potential to become an influential actor in the promotion and protection of human rights. Indeed, many scientific associations are already addressing human rights within their own discipline and have valuable experience to share in setting up and sustaining human rights programs. Through collaboration and leveraging the experience of its members, the Coalition can work with scientific associations to build their commitment and capacity to contribute meaningfully to human rights issues and activities. By developing human rights-related activities and services specifically for the scientific community, the Coalition can assist its members build their capacity for human rights advocacy, learn from best practices, and become a part of a larger community dedicated to the realization of human rights.

Objectives

- Awareness and appreciation within the scientific community of human rights issues and alternatives for addressing them;
- Greater and more varied forms of engagement by scientific associations in human rights; and
- Enhanced capacity of scientific associations to address human rights issues through a variety of means, including the application of their discipline's tools and techniques.

Content

- Provide guidance to members of scientific associations who want to establish human rights committees, sections, working groups, etc.;
- Develop both general and discipline-specific human rights modules;
- Organize general and discipline-specific human rights training sessions for interested scientific associations and their leadership (e.g., in-coming human rights committee chairs);
- Encourage and assist scientific associations to incorporate human rights themes into annual meetings, including in the form of human rights workshops, trainings, and lectures;
- Conduct outreach activities to scientific and professional associations not already engaged in human rights, increasing their understanding of human rights and its interface with science and technology; and
- Explore options for developing and introducing human rights into academic curricula, sub-fields, and/or clinics.

Support

- Financial: from moderate (office-printed training materials, meeting costs) to costly (professionally-designed materials, outreach travel and associated costs)
- Human: authors, editors, interns for research, trainers
- Material: research and instructional materials

Area of Activity V: Information Resources

Rationale

To encourage and facilitate efforts to bridge the scientific and human rights communities, the Coalition will need to identify, compile, and develop resources and create opportunities for exchange to establish a stronger foundation for productive, collaborative work on human rights. Crucial for this project is the exchange of information on scientists' understanding of what science can bring to human rights work and what human rights practitioners can bring to science. Other topics to be explored include what the scientific method entails, what the human rights approach requires, and the role the media traditionally has played in conveying information produced by both communities. By providing a variety of materials on such topics, the Coalition will make an important contribution to bridging science and human rights and their respective communities, and make their collaboration in tackling human rights challenges that face the world more likely.

Objectives

- Availability of a variety of excellent and accessible information materials that fill gaps in information not already covered by human rights organizations or scientific societies and that address an array of topics needed to promote and support collaboration between scientists and human rights practitioners; and
- Better-informed scientific and human rights communities, with members who are better-prepared to work together.

Content

- Identify the information about science, the scientific method, technologies, etc. that human rights practitioners require; compile what exists; develop a plan for producing what does not;
- Identify the information about human rights, the human rights system, methodology, etc. that scientists require; compile what exists; develop a plan for producing what does not;
- Develop an initial information piece on the connections between human rights and science (e.g., "translating one for the other," Article 15);
- Explore the possibility of producing a curriculum for teaching science and human rights;
- In all materials, consider discipline-specific contributions, and applications for both U.S. and around the world;
- Collaborate with science and human rights committees and organizations in the U.S. and abroad in disseminating the materials; and
- Explore a variety of information tools and forms, including articles, website content, brochures, teaching aids, and primers.

Support

- Financial: from modest (web-based materials) to moderate (office-printed materials) to costly (professionally-designed materials)
- Human: authors, interns for research
- Material: periodic meetings, research materials

AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition Membership

Who We Are

The AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition is a network of scientific organizations that recognizes a role for science and scientists in efforts to realize human rights. We invite eligible organizations who share the Coalition's goals (*see Mission and Goals*) to participate as members. Scientific organizations that wish to explore involvement in the Coalition may participate as an affiliated organization or may simply attend Coalition meetings. Individual scientists are encouraged to participate through their scientific organizations, but may also be involved as affiliated members.

Membership Categories

Member Organizations

Eligibility. Membership is open to:

- Scientific associations, inclusive of the behavioral, life, physical, and social sciences, whether or not the association is affiliated with AAAS
- Professional societies of scientists, engineers, technicians, medical professionals, public health practitioners, and related professions
- Academies of science
- Other formal networks of scientists

Organizations both inside the United States and abroad are welcome to participate.

Member organizations may vary substantially in their level of prior involvement in human rights. Member organizations share a recognition of the need for scientists to participate in efforts to realize human rights, and a commitment to do so in some way (applying their science to human rights work, promoting specific human rights, defending the human rights of scientists, etc.). We encourage member organizations to seek the support of their governing boards in order to affirm this commitment, build a foundation of support for association activities in this area, and raise awareness among member scientists.

Representation. Member scientific organizations set the direction for the Coalition. Member organizations must designate two committed representatives to serve on the Coalition. The two representatives of the scientific organizations may be members of the organizational leadership, membership, and/or staff. The aim is to ensure both a voice for professional members of the organization and continuity.

Participation. The Coalition meets semi-annually in Washington, DC, and committees meet as needed to accomplish their goals.* In keeping with human rights practice, the Coalition will promote a highly participatory membership, involving active and committed engagement. As such, member organizations are expected to make a meaningful contribution to the Coalition through regular and active participation in Coalition meetings and committees. Organizational representatives will be called upon to serve on at least one committee or working group.

By joining the Coalition, organizational members also commit to raising awareness within their organizations about science and human rights.

Organizations can do this by:

- Forming a science and human rights committee, working group, or section within their association
- Hosting science and human rights workshops for their association's members
- Writing articles about human rights for their organization's newsletter or website
- Organizing sessions at their association's annual meetings
- Drafting case studies of how their science has or can be used to address human rights concerns

Benefits of Participation. The Coalition is the only broad-based effort to mobilize scientific organizations and scientists in the service of human rights. Member organizations become an integral part of a collaborative effort to promote human rights through science. Through this collaboration, organizations will be able to:

- Benefit from the Coalition's programs, workshops, and materials in five areas of activity
- Receive assistance in organizing science and human rights workshops, annual meeting sessions, and fora
- Obtain assistance in developing principles on science and human rights for ethics codes
- Link with scientists and scientific associations across disciplines
- Link with the human rights community both in the United States and abroad
- Access human rights expertise
- Join the Coalition listserv and receive news and information about science and human rights developments, events, and publications

Affiliated Organizations and Scientists

Scientific organizations that want to explore the relevance of human rights for their disciplines or associations are welcome to participate as affiliated organizations. Although member scientific organizations set the direction for the Coalition, affiliated organizations and scientists may help shape that direction through participation in Coalition committees and interactions with member organizations. Individual scientists, engineers, and science professionals are encouraged to work through their professional societies but may affiliate with the Coalition. Only designated organizational representatives may speak on behalf of the member organizations.

Affiliated scientists will have the benefit of:

- Coalition support in introducing human rights to their associations
- Participation in all Coalition activities, including area of activity committees
- Joining the Coalition listserv to receive news and information about science and human rights developments, events, and publications

How to Join

The Coalition does not impose dues for participation in its activities. To join, simply follow the links for one of the following:

Member Organization
Affiliated Organization
Affiliated Scientist

Collaboration

The Coalition welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with all networks of scientists and scientific associations to achieve mutual goals. Although based in the United States, the Coalition especially welcomes the opportunity to work with our counterparts abroad to facilitate the use of science and the involvement of scientists in human rights issues.

Coalition Support

The AAAS Science and Human Rights Program serves as the Secretariat and provides support for Coalition activities.

*Note that this section may change based on the Coalition's discussion regarding structure.