

**AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition**  
**Planning Meeting VI**  
September 15, 2008  
Washington, DC

## Meeting Report

### Welcome and Introductions

Mona Younis (*AAAS Science and Human Rights Program*)

Mona welcomed meeting attendees. She recalled the first meeting that was held on June 12, 2007 to explore combining and coordinating efforts of scientific associations currently involved in human rights in order to increase the number of associations engaged in human rights and their impact and effectiveness. The first meeting was attended by 14 members of 11 organizations. This, the last planning meeting, was attended by 22 members from 16 organizations.

Mona explained that at the first meeting participants committed to working collaboratively to lay the foundations for a coalition ahead of a public launch. The idea being that “we should have more than just a good idea” to present at the launch. Over the course of six planning meetings, participants drafted and discussed recommendations for mission and goals, activities, membership, and more, and working groups began implementing steps towards the activities they had agreed to pursue. With this meeting, the foundational work will be done.

Mona then thanked Rachel Franklin (*Association of American Geographers*) for agreeing to facilitate this, the final and most challenging planning meeting.

### Meeting Objectives

Rachel Franklin (*Association of American Geographers*)

Rachel began by reminding attendees that we would be covering a lot of ground at this, the sixth and final Coalition planning meeting ahead of the Launch in January, 2009. She explained that the meeting would be devoted to tackling four main issues. First, we would discuss the two final sets of recommendations – Organizational Structure and the Plan of Action (2009-2011). Second, the full suite of Foundational Documents would be reviewed as a package, to ensure consistency and readability. Next, the Coalition's Areas of Activity would have the opportunity to present the progress they have made towards completing their “next steps.” Finally, the Launch program would be presented, strategies for outreach to the scientific community discussed, and suggestions made to complete the Launch program agenda. Rachel added that we would end by hearing about the Coalition’s first event, on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, and the Article 15 training on December 10<sup>th</sup>.

Rachel thanked the group for their participation and explained that she would keep the meeting to schedule while the leader of each agenda item would direct the discussion of their relevant area.

### **Organizational Structure: a recommendation**

Rob Albro (*American Anthropological Association*)

In his presentation of the Organizational Structure document that he and Mona had drafted, Rob highlighted the decision to emphasize a decentralized structure, reflected also in the Membership statement, and to a Coalition that is driven by active member participation. This is in keeping with the other agreed upon principles, which include the goals of inclusiveness and of transparency. As the Secretariat, the AAAS Science and Human Rights Program will serve primarily in the capacity of facilitator, convening the Council, Steering Committee, and diverse working groups, in helping the Coalition set and implement priorities, and in fundraising. Rob added that, “such an organizational arrangement ensures that priorities are largely established by member participants, that the Coalition does not become insular, and that new questions and priorities can find a place in the Coalition's work.” Participants provided comments on the Organizational Structure ([revised document](#)).

#### **Substantive Comments and Suggestions:**

- Link the organizational structure document to the membership document by placing one directly after the other in the packet of foundational documents.
- Provide a clarification regarding how new issues and areas of activity are brought into the Coalition, by including a brief statement concerning "How We Operate" in the document.
- Include explicit language regarding the involvement of international participants.
- Rob and Mona will compile a list of the initial members of the Steering Committee based on the following criteria: (1) active in building the Coalition over the past year; (2) officially represent their associations; (3) gender balance; (4) diverse set of associations represented; and (5) at least one member with managerial experience. The list will be drawn up in time for the Steering Committee to hold its first meeting in December ahead of the Launch.

### **Foundational Documents: final review**

Clinton Anderson (*American Psychological Association*)

Clinton introduced the foundational documents that were compiled by SHRP staff and reviewed at previous meetings. The only new document was the Appendix, which sets out definitions, elaborations and clarifications. Clinton explained that the documents contained in the packet of materials were drafted to enable us together to lay the foundations for the Coalition, and to present the “who, what, where, and how” of the Coalition. The packet of materials only included documents already reviewed. Clinton explained that the Organizational Structure will be added to the packet for the Launch following review at the planning meeting. Participants provided comments on the documents ([revised document](#)).

#### **Substantive Comments and Suggestions:**

*Mission and Goals Statement*

- Amend final paragraph of mission to refer to “all other relevant international human rights treaties and norms.”
- Redraft second goal to reflect human rights implications for science (Rob Albro and Julie Mertus agreed to redraft this goal).

#### *Membership*

- Emphasize in “Who We Are” that individual scientists are welcome to be engaged in the Coalition as affiliated members.
- Important to clearly identify the different categories of membership (e.g., include on Coalition home-page a “to join” section clearly identifying the different categories).
- Strengthen the final sentence of “Who We Are” to highlight the importance of individual members encouraging their organizations to get involved.
- Legal counsel should review the membership document.

#### *Areas of Activity*

- All Area of Activity documents were accepted as presented.
- List names of each Area of Activity on the front page of the foundational documents.
- Area of Activity “committees” should be now referred to as “working groups.”

#### *Appendix*

- Add a statement about the relationship between the Coalition and individual states.

### **Areas of Activity: Updates and Next, Next Steps**

Jessica Wyndham (*AAAS Science and Human Rights Program*)

Jessica highlighted the progress made by each of the Area of Activity working groups towards completing their next steps. In addition, she emphasized the importance of this initial work ahead of the Launch as a way of showing what the Coalition can achieve, demonstrating what the areas of activity will look like in practice, revealing the seriousness of the Coalition, and inspiring and encouraging participants at the Launch to join the Area of Activity working groups.

#### **Substantive Comments and Suggestions:**

- Where relevant, links to existing courses on human rights and science should be added to the Coalition’s resource pages.
- Compile list of scientific association Annual Meetings to be held in Washington DC, and interstate, in order to identify opportunities for presenting on the work of the Coalition and areas of activity, e.g., the American Chemical Society (August 16-21, 2009). Brad Miller suggested there may be an opportunity for the Service to the Scientific Community working group to present at the ACS meeting. The Association of American Geographers also routinely includes a session addressing geography and human rights.
- Area of Activity working groups could design posters on their areas to be displayed in a poster session held during the Launch. Video presentations could also be prepared.
- Internship announcements aimed at eliciting support for the Coalition should be sent to academic Coalition participants for distribution within their faculties.

- The following participants volunteered to join Area of Activity committees: Brian Estes (Service to the Human Rights Community), Lee Herring (Service to the Scientific Community), Nirbhay Kumar (Welfare of Scientists).
- Michel Irwin, Brad Miller, and Paula Skedsvold agreed to pilot the surveys developed by the Service to the Scientific Community committee.

**Plan of Action (2009-2011): review of draft**

Mona Younis (*AAAS Science and Human Rights Program*)

Mona began by thanking Susan Hinkins (*American Statistical Association*) and Clinton Anderson (*American Psychological Association*) for their tremendous work on the document.

Introducing the document for discussion, Mona began by drawing participants' attention to three items. First, she explained that the three-year Plan of Action was intended to be used by the Steering Committee, other committees, and working groups for planning, organizing, outreach, and fundraising. The draft would be revised based on feedback at this planning meeting and included in the packet of materials to be distributed at the Launch. She noted that detailed plans of action specific to each Area of Activity will be drafted by the relevant working groups after the Launch, and before March 2009.

A second item that needed to be pointed out was the introduction for the first time of a "joint initiative." Mona explained that in the course of drafting the Plan of Action (2009-2011) "we realized that something was missing – an overarching initiative that pulls us together." Such an initiative would have to meet several criteria: it would have to enhance, not compete with the work of the working groups; lie at the nexus of science and human rights; and be an obvious "fit" for scientific associations. We realized that the work Jessica Wyndham is doing on Article 15, the right to "enjoy the benefits of scientific progress", fits the criteria beautifully.

Finally, Mona drew attention to the table appended to the Plan of Action which contains some preliminary baseline data. In order to monitor and evaluate progress and success, the Coalition will need to establish benchmarks, which in turn require baseline data. The document identifies some baseline data for membership and one each for areas of activity. However, each Area of Activity needs to identify additional baseline data that can be researched and included in the Plan of Action ahead of the Launch.

Participants provided comments on the Plan of Action (2009-2011) ([revised document](#)).

**Substantive Comments and Suggestions:**

- Concern was expressed regarding the amount of work that would be involved in carrying out the activities listed under the Area of Activity plans, and that perhaps it is unrealistic. A suggestion was made to clarify that the activities listed were "Possible Common Activities" and that they had been "abstracted" from the Area of Activity documents, to which the working groups had already committed themselves.

- There is a need to reduce the overlap and increase the distinction between the work of the Membership, and Outreach and Communication committees.
- Clarification was requested regarding the item “presentation to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Geneva or New York).” The idea of becoming engaged in some way with the UN work on human rights was raised at the meeting that followed the symposium in December 2007, as part of our work to bring scientists to human rights efforts.
- Meeting participants expressed support for the proposed joint initiative on “Article 15.”

### **Next Steps:**

- SHRP staff will work with the Area of Activity working groups to identify additional baseline information for their areas of work for inclusion in the Plan of Action.

### **Coalition Launch**

Paula Skedsvold (*Federation of Behavioral, Psychological, and Cognitive Sciences*)

The Launch Program Committee<sup>1</sup> met via conference call in July to review progress and provide input into the program agenda, which is slowly being finalized. Paula presented the most recent version of the program to meeting attendees for feedback and ideas, particularly in three areas: plenary speaker from the scientific community; presenters and trainers for remaining program sessions; and outreach ahead of and follow-up after the Launch. Participants provided comments on the draft agenda ([updated agenda](#)).

### **Substantive Comments and Suggestions:**

- Plenary speaker: Confirmed plenary speakers include Mary Robinson, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and former President of Ireland. We still need a high profile (e.g., Noble Laureate) scientist who has demonstrated support for human rights. Several suggestions were made; SHRP staff will follow up.
- Sessions: Several suggestions were made for presenters and/or presenting organizations, which SHRP staff will follow up.
- Workshops: The description of the second workshop will be changed to: “Provide participants with an understanding of the responsibilities that emanate from international human rights norms, standards, and the law and draw inferences for the conduct of science.”
- New ideas: A poster session to display some work between scientists and human rights practitioners was suggested. Although participants liked the idea, we ultimately decided that this would be too difficult to organize in the short time we have left before the Launch.
- It was agreed that there should be tables in the hallways for distribution of information.

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<sup>1</sup> Rob Albro (American Anthropological Association), Clinton Anderson (American Psychological Association), Brian Estes (American Anthropological Association), Rachel Franklin (Association of American Geographers), Art Kendall (Capital Area Social Psychological Association), Nirbhay Kumar (American Society of Microbiology), and Paula Skedsvold (American Educational Research Association).

- Outreach: AAAS will be sending an invitation letter signed by Alan Leshner to the Association's affiliates' presidents, executive officers, and representatives. Additional outreach will be conducted by Coalition members by placing news items in associations' newsletters; speaking/presenting (or asking SHRP staff to do so) at society meetings in the Fall; and circulating invitations via listservs.

### Next Steps:

- Finalize Launch program
- AAAS sends invitation letters to the AAAS affiliates
- SHRP will develop a one-page description of the Coalition and the Launch for members' use in developing news items for inclusion in their associations' newsletters
- SHRP will develop brief PowerPoint presentation about the Coalition for members' use in their outreach efforts this Fall
- Coalition representatives will announce/present at association meetings in the Fall, including COSSA

### Miscellaneous

- **Service to the Human Rights Community – Outreach Event (October 23, 2008)**  
Susan Hinkins (*American Statistical Association*) and Hormuzd Katki (*Washington Statistical Society*)

This is the first event of the Service to the Human Rights Community working group. Hormuzd described the unusual format of the event. Three “teams” of scientists and human rights practitioners who successfully teamed up to tackle human rights challenges will be interviewed about their experience working together. Hormuzd sought suggestions for additional “teams.”

- **Article 15: Human Rights Training (December 10, 2008)**  
Jessica Wyndham (*AAAS Science and Human Rights Program*)

To mark the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Jessica is conducting a training on Article 15 (the right to the benefits of scientific progress) for all interested AAAS staff, fellows, and Coalition members. The training is intended to provide scientists with a general understanding of the content, significance and potential applications of Article 15. Anyone interested in finding out more about the training is encouraged to contact Jessica at [jwyndham@aaas.org](mailto:jwyndham@aaas.org).