OCB BOARD MEETING minutes 14-15 MARCH 2008

FRIDAY 14 March 2008

1. Somalia: security issues related to a return to Somalia
2. New GD nomination: Interviews of the GD candidates and election of the new GD

SATURDAY 15 March 2008

3. Swedish Roadmap on Shared Operations
4. Denationalisation of the OCB

Present:
Carlo Belloni, Rafaella Ravinetto, Stephane Goriely, Murielle Deguerry, Mauro Lucardi, André Di Prospero, Kim Bruun, Jean-Marie Kindermans, Anneli Eriksson

Invited: Gorik Ooms, Johan Mast (for the part on Swedish Roadmap)
FRIDAY 14 March 2008

1. **Somalia: security issues related to a return to Somalia**
   Presentation: Jérôme Oberreit, David Michalski
   Document: Slides

   Jérôme presents
   - an overview of MSF projects in Somalia
   - some elements of analysis of the Kismayo incident
   - the different level of conflicts in Somalia
   - The consequences on operations
   - Questions to MSF
   - Doing what MSF can and not what MSF want

   See slides:

   ![Somalia Board presentation 0308.ppt]

   David presents:
   - the history of the Bakool and Galgaduud projects
   - the way we have operated and the results
   - the challenges and other factors in the wake of Kismayo and Bossasso incidents
   - Proposed changes to answer the challenges
   - Were we are currently

   ![Somalia Board presentation.ppt]

   Discussion and remarks
   - What will be the next steps?
     Until we didn’t find out what happened, we will,
     - go on with the analyse of the incident in the frame of the Somalian context
     - look at the analysis of the management of the MSF-H Kismayo mission
     - capitalise lessons to minimize risks and exposure
     - assess the need and possibility to send several expats again, with in and out visits to explore how we can operate and have expats again and get a better reading of the context.

   - Seen the number of different MSF sections projects (14 projects, 100 expats), were there no element of flag planting in Somalia (Moga)?

   - We can say there were some in the beginning in Mogadisciu, but 'In Fine', needs were so big that no competition occurred between sections and good complementarities and cooperation were build.

   - Underlying question: how far can we go to answer the most pressing needs in dangerous contexts like Somalia, Iraq or Afghanistan? Do we simply need to accept there will be risks or do we first need to have the guarantee we can minimize them? What lessons can we learn from what happened in Somalia in this respect?
- We should as a minimum make sure we are able to read the context and put the necessary means to enable this (also because things are evolving very fast in those very complex and difficult to read contexts, and as high turnover can hinder our comprehension). And some suggest the analysis of the context has to be done very carefully on the ground region by region, locality by locality. Otherwise we should certainly keep from launching any projects or activities. Some raise doubts on whether it was the case for some places and projects.

- Our best protection is the impact we have on populations. If it is small, no protection can be guaranteed. Serving populations from different origins/clans, community based communication, national staff adequate involvement also ensures neutrality and better protection.

- What about the visibility issue? Measures are taken in our programs where visibility goes hand in hand with acceptance to ensure enhanced security. It is through the establishment of a network of contacts, quality operations and visibility that we can diminish risks.

- Armed guards are used as the inescapable modus operandi to protect your resources in Somalia. Their presence serve purely as deterrence and does not aim at any form of engagement.

- To which extent do we increase or diminish the risks for our staff with Remote Control through Somali and Kenyan staff?

The project and risk management is designed with expat presence. The national staff will incur less risks with international staff behind (delegated access to resources etc.).

- Expats behaviour can be at the origin of security incidents. Expats will have to be briefed very tightly on security issues.

- Between others, filtering context informations can have disastrous consequences. Committees must be used but MSF must remain vigilant that information is not kept away from us due to rivalries or fear of MSF evacuation.

- The general OCB security, abduction and security training guidelines are being reviewed.

The security policy document will be sent to the OCB Board for comments, followed by a formal approval.

Someone suggest this document should include something specific on the patients security, in relation with what happened in South Sudan.

- To what extent MSF-H could learn from us before opening Kismayo will be studied in the security review.

  - Can we say if the incident was more due to the anti-western context rather than the Somali context?

Radicalisation of the Somalian society with suicide bombs attacks, recent copy paste of Iraqi techniques is an evidence, but we cannot draw rush conclusions from this.

  - Are we able to stabilise the coordination positions in Somalia?

The lack of supervisory skills has been an issue but both HoM and MedCo positions are now stabilised, we have very good 1st missions, and are reinforcing the training local staff. The reputation of the mission is good and a longer term HR plan and a vision of the management of national and international HR have been
developed to ensure continuity. The new team is convinced of the approach of full integration of national staff. We have had much more HR gaps problems in Sudan. We will however need to make sure that national staff that are key in the set-up remain in the mission.

- The deterioration of the quality of our projects that followed our withdrawal is due to the lack of presence and supervision by international staff. Brain drain in Somalia is high. All our staff has been trained by MSF.

**Decision**
The OCB Board backs the operations and validate the proposed approach in Somalia, including a return of international staff - which includes the responsibility to make everything to minimize the risks. And this "en connaissance de cause" and being aware of the complexity of the context.

2. **New GD nomination: Interviews of the GD candidates and election of the new GD**

**Decision**
The OCB Board elected Christopher Stokes as a new General Director for the OCB and MSF-B.

This will have to be confirmed formally by the MSFB Board.
SATURDAY 15 March 2008

3. Swedish Roadmap on Shared Operations
Presentation: Johan Mast and Dan Sermand
Documents: MSFSE_Road_map_SO_JAN2008.pdf; MSFSE_Road_map_SO_JAN2008_annex.doc

Note: this presentation is for information and discussion only and is not meant at taking a decision. This would need to be taken by the OCB Board in a broader and longer term view for the OCB and in the frame of the OCB governance process.

Background
In 2005 MSF Sweden held discussions leading to the Mid-Term-Policy (2005-2008): the Board and office discussed the vision for the coming years and one of the elements was to improve the links with the operations.

The first idea was to have an evaluation unit. A study was conducted and presented to the Board (in the presence of a DO): the Board thought the idea was fine but requested to look into more and other options (a medical unit, a cell, ...). A feasibility study was done in 2007 and presented to the GA in June 2007. The GA approved increased support to the operations and gave mandate to the Board to take the best option. The Board decided to look at the decentralised cell option.

This should be seen against the background of the developments and resolutions:
- IC resolution (1997): active participation
- IC (2002): operationality at the core
- Altafulla (2002): real operational involvement
- IC (2002): supports shared responsibilities
- IC (2007): encourage co-ownership of operations

Till now, MSF Sweden has translated this operational support through different actions:
- Direct operational support
  Office staff go to the field and experienced field workers are attracted to work at the office. In 2006, MSF Sweden staff and board members performed a total of 0,4 FTE in the field, equivalent to five months (either in missions, support or field visits). Today, 10 out of 24 of the MSF Sweden office staff have MSF field work experience.
- Emergency pool position
  In February 2005 a decentralised emergency pool coordinator position was opened within the Swedish office, and today MSF Sweden has the space and capacity to open yet another position.
- Combo
  In January 2006 MSF Sweden took the responsibility of the operational communication (Combo) for the OCB operations in Sierra Leone and Liberia within Cell 3
- Support to Gömda
  The Programmes and Communications departments were also well involved in operational support to the Gömda project, an OCB mission in Sweden where MSF ensured access to health to asylum seekers, with intensive advocacy and communication activities.

Footnotes:
1 The MSF ExCom “brainstorming weekend” in Altafulla, Spain in 2002 generated a discussion paper on growth which states that “There is a strategic need for the development of real operational involvement among partner sections. […] Criteria that would help determine which partner section could incorporate a certain level of operational capacity [are]: level of fundraising […] large HR potential and increasing number of experienced field staff being grown in a partner section; big public support and potential for increased development and growth of that public support”.
2 the International Council (IC) in 2002 states that it “supports shared responsibility for field activities by having operational units in sections outside the current operational centres, if they are established on agreed common conditions including but not limited to that the host sections have: satisfactory financial basis; sufficient public support; sufficient number of skilled and experienced people to secure a continuity of the operational unit; proper governance structure in place; and that the operational unit is under the direct authority of one of the five operational directorates.”
3 Later on, in 2007, the IC says that “We should encourage and strengthen sections co-ownership of operations through existing operational directorates.” (From the IC recommendations on rationale for growth, operational centres and new entities from March 2007)
- Advocacy and awareness raising activities

**MSF Sweden field workers**

- Departures MSF Sweden, 2001-01-01 – 2007-12-17
  MSF Sweden has, since 2001, sent 242 volunteers to perform a total of 462 missions or departures. Of these, 61 field workers have done almost 90 missions in coordination positions, with the majority working in the national coordination and the rest as field coordinators. (Between 2001-01-01 – 2007-12-17, 7 people from MSF Sweden have worked as Heads of Mission, 6 as Medical Coordinators, 5 as Logistics Coordinators, 20 as Admin or Finance Coordinators and 23 as Field Coordinators. Figures from the MSF Sweden HR department.)

![Field worker roles](image)

- Retention rate: number of missions conducted per expat (of a total of 448 departures) in the period 2001-2007

![Retention rate chart](image)

- Countries, languages
  The DRC is the country, second to Sudan, to where MSF Sweden has sent the most field workers. Thanks to more focused recruitment criteria as well as language courses provided by MSF in cooperation with the Sida Civil Society Center, 55% of those who went to the field in 2007 were French speaking.

![Country distribution](image)
MSF Sweden today: finances
- Funds raised 2000-2006, projection for 2007-2008

Since 2000 MSF Sweden has almost tripled its revenues, with the turnover increasing from €8 million in 2000 to €21 million in 2006. The prognosis for 2007 is a total of €23 million, with €14 million being private donations and €8 million institutional funds and for 2008 the total funds raised is foreseen to reach €24 million. MSF Sweden is the third biggest financial contributor to the OCB.

MSF Sweden today: the association
- From 80 to 230 members in two years
- Active satellite groups around the country
- Regular MSF evenings on current topics

The MSF Sweden / Läkare Utan Gränser association has seen its member quota rise steadily from 80 members in 2005 to 230 members in 2007. Satellite groups are opening around the country, consisting not only of medical students but also members with field experience.

MSF Sweden today: Public support
- 93% of the Swedish population know about MSF
- 88% believe that our work is very or quite important
- Third NGO after Red Cross and Save the Children

Situation analysis (if a decision is taken to move ahead)
- Time plan written and approved
- MoU written and approved
- Financial issues clarified
- HR for the cell recruited
- Guidelines for HR management of field workers in place
- Adequate physical space
- Sufficient material & equipment

In summary
- Altafulla criteria achieved
- Make use of the experience in MSF Sweden HR
- Strengthen ties with institutional donors
- Strengthen ties with medical institutions
- Brings MSF Sweden closer to the operational reality
- MSF Sweden is committed, capable and competent…
- Whenever the OCB is ready, MSF Sweden is ready to host a delocalized OCB Operational Cell
**Questions, remarks from the meeting**

- It is a Swedish initiative, but when taking about experienced MSF staff, there is of course a Scandinavian dimension.

- What is the added value for the Operations? It seems a stand-alone exercise from a PS. Has the executive in Brussels been consulted?
  It was an MSF Sweden Board request to look into opportunities for increased support for Operations. MSF Sweden was not necessarily asking for a decentralised cell. We first came with a proposal for an evaluation unit, but this did not seem welcome as similar units in other sections have not been successful at all. The DOs guided us more towards a decentralised cell. A medical unit was also a possibility for MSF Sweden.
  The OPS have been involved in the process leading to this document; this does not mean that they agree with or subscribe everything that is in the document. From the interviews with the OPS it was also clear that they think we do not need more cells. If we make a cell in Sweden, we have to cut somewhere else.

- Regarding what is stated in the summary: you do not need a cell to make full use of what you state as the advantages. You will have to come with something extra to justify the extra costs of a decentralised cell.
  We would for example be able to staff the cell with Scandinavian experienced HR.

- How does MSF Sweden benchmark itself with other sections? This is not included in the study and makes it difficult to make an OCB decision.
  MSF Sweden fully agrees. It is only a part of the work. The OPS have to clarify what they need, and the PS what they can offer. The same exercise would have to be done in the other sections. It (i.e. benchmarking of sections) should also have been done for the medical units in Brazil and SA. The ball is always and is also now in the OCB OPS camp. MSF Sweden does not claim anything.

- What would be the decision process to decentralise a cell to Sweden?
  It has to be integrated in the view on OCB in 10 years; it should not be based on 1 proposal. One element would be to make use of experienced HR that are not necessarily Belgian.
  This is also linked to the discussion on denationalisation: an OCB Board that looks at the OPS interests first. You cannot ask the executive to make these decisions because it is so sensitive: we need guidance from the board on this.

- We do need the board looking at the global picture. It is an interesting proposal because it also points at the Scandinavian dimension. Time is needed to get away from national interests; this has to be built step by step.
  Yes and the decentralisation study showed that we need a vision: the OPS need to feed the debate to help the OCB Board to take a decision. This Swedish study is neither a threat nor a claim but part of feeding this debate/exercise.

- Some ideas in the study are debatable (eg. Do we need to make it possible for people to work in their home country?). An assessment needs to be made by the executive to help the OCB Board to take decisions. With regard to sectional interests: board members are human and we are accountable to both our section’s board and the OCB Board: this is an exercise in equilibrium. Even if as a board member you have your section’s interest at heart, this does not mean that as a board member you go along with everything this section proposes.

- Are there negative criteria? Reasons for not placing a cell somewhere?
  Not all sections are boxing in the same league in all matters; it is maybe time to stop being politically correct about this.

- We also need an evaluation from the field: is decentralisation positive, negative, neutral, a solution or an burden?
At the moment an international study is being done. At the last HOM week decentralisation was discussed in general. Some feel that we should not wait for this international study (too top down, too theoretical and not helpful for OCB level, not clear where the process is: priority seems to be given to operational accountability). Others feel that decentralised cells are quite new and therefore it makes sense to make a common analysis - which is in any case different also from the constant evaluation of the current functioning of the cells within OCB – and that we should focus on influencing the methodology of the international study, to make sure we get the information we need.

- What are the next steps?
   Either we continue on a case by case basis, or we develop a masterplan for decentralisation to be proposed to the OCB Board. Given the HQ growth within the OCB, we do need a decision/control mechanism, mirrored by a board. Decentralisation is not a purely managerial issue and needs more discussion at the associative level.

   Shouldn’t we clarify in the minutes that there was not any decision making (nor plans for decision making) at the end of the debate? It could be unclear, for people who were not present.

4. Denationalisation of the OCB

a) Executive part

Presentation: Patrice Vastel

Where we are in the process:

- identified 4 categories of functions: OCB, PS, in-between, legally linked to a section
- next step would be to go through the different functions and to define in which category they fall + clarify their governance.
- The DG7 drafted a TOR for a programme officer to work on this, as well as on the package needed to carry out the split => 7 deliverables have been identified, to be done in 6 months
- DG7 are to approve the TOR and launch the recruitment (CDD or consultancy)

**Questions, remarks from the meeting**

It would be good to include the link with the international architecture more explicitly in the TOR

As the DG7 platform is not functioning at the moment, the project is on standby: it does not seem to make sense if one section disagrees on the process. The Italian board members confirm that, as they already wrote by e-mail, they respect the decision of Kostas, which is in any cases temporary. They underline that their (MSF-I Board) position is linked to the departures of Gorik (planned) and William (unexpected): they want to give the new people the opportunity to get into the process and wait for a more stable environment. According to Kostas there was no agreement in the DG7 on the recruitment process and the TOR; still, the disagreement is on the process, not on the contents. MSF-I remarks that they have worked very hard to bring MSF-I closer to/more active in the OCB (eg. 100% of funds to OCB, and they contributed actively to the associative proposal). However, they remind that they have never understood the reasons to rush for the functional split, since the September meeting in Copenhagen; and that they just disagree on the current process of the functional split but they fully agree with the need to work together to improve the executive governance of the OCB.
Gorik and Patrice put a huge amount of work in this, yet it might be worthwhile to wait for the new DG to make sure the process is fully legitimised.

The Board reminds that it had asked to start the process in September in Copenhagen; and acknowledges that at this time point, the two-month timeframe to work on this was probably too optimistic/idealistic, and accepts to share responsibility for this.

Several Board members express their surprise at the fact that a platform can get blocked by a person withdrawing. If a fieldco and a HOM are not talking to each other this is a dangerous situation. If two DG do not talk this is dangerous for the OCB: at least they should continue to talk. Regardless of the issue, many OCB Board members cannot accept that someone withdraws from a platform that needs to discuss many other issues that are part of his mandate. The Italian members note that this seemed to be the only effective way to be listened on a very relevant topic. Others note that when there is a governance problem (and some seem to indicate that there was a governance problem and that this issue was just the final drop, after many unresolved disagreements), then it should have been brought to the OCB Board. Other acknowledges that it is logical to withdraw from a platform if you fear that your voice has not been taken into account and can be misused; others point out that it is problematic if you need that same platform to solve the governance issue.

There is agreement that there has been a real governance issue and that the OCB Board should have been informed about the disagreements in the DG7 about the process of the functional split. The OCB Board encourages people who disagree strongly on a matter and feel there voice is not considered, to refer to the OCB Board.

What now?

We will not have a proposal on the executive side for the GA.

a) we can submit to the GAs the associative proposal, which is a mandatory pre-requisite for the executive part, and ask the permission to the GA to continue to work on the executive side

b) we delay to 2009 for the full package

Although this process was triggered by the executive, it is a good and respectful idea to present the associative package first to the GAs.

On the executive side however, it is also important to “keep the ball rolling”; a reasonable delay which takes into account the handover at executive level is not a problem, but we should avoid being questioned for too long about what will happen next.

All agree to present the associative proposal to the GAs.

b) Proposal associative part

Cf. document Jean-Marie Kindermans

Proposal:
- OCB associative gathering, open to everybody but voting members to be determined (focus on field)
- Voting on motions
- OCB Board to be composed of 7 presidents and 6 or 8 number of members elected by the OCB associative gathering.

Questions, remarks from the meeting

- Now we have an OCB Board with co-opted members who are accountable to no-one, this is a step forward
- Some feel that the proposal lacks a link with the PS logic and problems. If we elect OCB Board members that are not in a PS board, there is an even bigger risk of disconnection with the PS. However, others feel that it has already been difficult to fill the co-opted places; we need people who have the time and the energy to invest in the OCB Board. Involvement of elected OCB Board members that are not part of a PS Board can be stimulated in other ways as well (VC, put operational matters on the agenda etc).

- What would be the status of the OCB associative gathering? It is a gathering, not a GA. Although this body would not have the same power as a GA, it will have to give the OCB board the mandate to establish internal working rules.

- What would be the place of non-OCB PS members in such an associative structure? As for the current GA, it would be open to participation for everyone. If they want to vote, they have to become a member of an OCB PS.

- What will be the decision mechanism on this proposal? As the current agreement was made with 7, it takes 7 to change it. This is also important for the legitimacy. Reference is made to the La Mancha process: the GAs had the space to react and had to agree on the basic principles.

- It is remarked by an MSF Belgium member that the members should be more involved in the preparations of the proposal as this will give more strength to get it accepted by the GA of MSF B. The members feel that it is very difficult to talk to the OCB Board members (cf. the letter that was sent by the Gaziers that never received an answer). The OCB Board remarks that all board meetings are open and the national GAs gave a mandate to the OCB board members. Yet it is felt by some members of MSF-B that the OCB Board goes beyond what was voted at the GA of MSFB: in 2005 the GA of MSFB gave a mandate to the OCB Board on operations; and for example in the January meeting the OCB Board is involved in decentralisation issues, which is felt not to be operational issues. The OCB Board is still working on the OCB-perimeter - and it can for example be debated that decentralisation is part of the (support) to operations. In any case there is absolutely no unwillingness from the OCB Board to be transparent; it is more a matter of lack of time, but it is acknowledged by the board that it is not easy to follow the matter if you are not closely involved in the issue.

- With regard to the voting members: agreement to give voting rights to specific members, in order to put the focus on field members and to obtain a balance between HQ members.

- With regard to the composition of the OCB Board: after discussion it is agreed to propose a composition of 7 presidents + 6 members to be elected by the OCB associative gathering.

- What about this year? Do we put it up for vote and implement it already this year or do we organise it at the earliest possible opportunity for field involvement (eg around the AROs?)

  It is agreed that, if/when approved by the GAs, we will try to organise it this year around the AROs (to be discussed with the OPS if this is feasible). Till then the current system (OCB Board with co-opted members) stays in place.

The OCB Board agrees on:

- OCB associative gathering, open to all members, but with voting rights for specific members
- OCB Board of 7 presidents and 6 members elected by the voting members of the OCB associative gathering
- Any member of an OCB PS can present him/herself for the OCB Board (except members that are part of the executive)
- Encourage the elected members to participate in PS boards
- Approval of the 7 GAs is needed for this proposal
- If approved, the first OCB associative gathering will be organised later on, at a time when maximal field presence can be achieved (to be discussed with OPS). Till then the current system stays in place.