

Chantilly 2 minutes- 8th & 9th May 1996

This International Meeting gathered approximately 200 Médecins Sans Frontières, the majority being co-ordinators.

The working group discussions on the first day reported on the different types of MSF operations (in acute conflicts, chronic conflicts, destabilised countries or those under reconstruction, social projects, endemic diseases and Aids.)

The summary showed the difficulty to lead to definite conclusions and to discuss matters calmly and without caricatures about certain issues (witnessing-témoignage, independence,...)

We may conclude that the variety of approaches remains to be seen as enriching in spite of the difficulties that this entails; that there is a necessity to define better the "needs" which we answer to (or choose to answer to), in an ever changing environment (Eastern Europe, big cities,...); that there is a need to explain and spread better what we understand by witnessing-témoignage (denunciation being just a small part, the most visible); that there is a mutual wish to be more open in our operations (taking note that Zaire is a typical country for MSF intervention, the will to do more social work,...) but also that, however, MSF will find it hard to move from long term action to long term commitment.

It has become clear that there is a need to go into more detail in all of these questions, not in general terms or in theoretical terms (which entails stereotypes during the debates, and a lack of real relation to the subject) but about genuine cases, and in particular in the intervening countries themselves: furthermore this will allow an increase in confidence and tolerance towards others during these discussions.

Finally, it was admitted that there is a joint responsibility to reduce costs (especially administrative costs in the capitals,...) in the countries and to find a common communication: a better co-ordination in the field is absolutely essential in order to succeed.

Nevertheless, the following day, the co-ordinators took the initiative to erase any confusion and discuss in more concrete terms than on the first day, in order to recall that the framework defined at Chantilly 1 seemed reasonable and sufficient: "the field representatives confirmed their agreement on the directions decided in the meetings and in the Chantilly 1 documents; in incorporating the reports from the mini general assemblies, we approve the Chantilly 1 documents and we insist that they must be put into practise swiftly and decisively on all levels".

The mini general assemblies minutes were read out and presented as topic for discussion.

Besides remarks about MSF's identity, already taken into account, the different working groups discussed the propositions on the international construction of MSF:

mechanisms of collaboration in crisis and/or in stable countries; decentralization between head offices and the field; the emergency team; the regrouping of human resources; the regrouping of supporting services; the mechanisms of international "non-decision"; the mechanisms of international communication, independence and financial backing.

Certain working groups came up with more tangible recommendations than others which can be summarised as follow and which were approved during the plenary session:

1. Collaboration in the field

1.1 No exploratory mission is to be opened without consulting the section(s) present in the country;

1.2 a rationalization study (in terms of economic scale) should be carried out in each country by the co-ordinators, the conclusions should be accepted by all the co-ordinators, and the result should be put into practise during 1997, at the latest;

1.3 there should be a policy paper, in writing, between all the sections present in the same country, by 1997 at the latest;

1.4 the proposition to internationalize the field cannot be frozen by the head offices (a one-year trial period is proposed);

1.5 when a second section arrives in a country, the first must be accepted as the MSF representative; however, this does not imply that the second section is under its co-ordination;

1.6 continue the progress initiated with the emergency team (ET) and better define the next stages of action beyond the ET.

2. Regrouping Human Resources

2.1 Head Offices

- °25% of key posts in the head offices must be international by the year 2000;
- °increase the rotation between the offices and the field (for example by limiting the length of the mandates in the headquarters);
- °increase access to field posts to the personnel recruited by the delegate offices by installing a mutual data base.

2.2 Field

- °exchange co-ordinators between sections;
- °define a policy about local personnel (salaries, responsibilities, MSF participation,...) mutual to all the sections in each country.

2.3 Board of Directors

°increase the international presence in the Boards of Directors, by invitation, election or co-optation, in order to get more international participation.

2.4 Training

°internationalize all training programmes and develop languages trainings.

3. Regrouping the technical departments

3.1 Support the installation of the International medical coordinator and the integration of the medical departments during the coming years;

3.2 standardize the equipment and tools (computer software and hardware) is recommended;

3.3 assess the feasibility of the purchasing departments (MSF-H Logistics dep.; MSF- F Logistique Bordeaux; MSF-B Transfer) to come to a functional integration. Hans Grootendorst is asked to report to the IC in that regard;

3.4 integrate the departments for humanitarian affairs of the different sections as soon as possible, in order to come to one single approach and policy for advocacy; both in general and in country specific situations;

3.5 set up more regional posts.

4. Communication

4.1 Introduce international sitreps in all missions from now until September 1996: under the responsibility of the operations directors;

4.2 create a Médecins Sans Frontières data bank from now until September 1996: under the responsibility of the communication directors;

4.3 create a team of field press officers from now until June 1996: under the responsibility of the communication directors;

4.4 include working group meetings on the media during the co-ordinators training programme;

4.5 produce an explanatory document for the co-ordinator's use regarding witnessing-témoignage.

5. Independence

5.1 Clarify and explain the concept "independence";

5.2 create an international fund to guarantee independence;

5.3 ask the International Council to supervise the independence in general and in specific cases (audits,...) and to decide on allocation of the international funds.

6. MSF Structure

Enlarge the delegate offices representation in the International Council.

Conclusion

Remains the follow-up such as the propositions from the mini general assemblies as well as the recommendations from the meeting Chantilly 2.

At present, there isn't any other international organ to make decisions or to supervise, apart from the International Council (the first working group on the decision mechanisms showed the complexity of setting up new structures.)

It is the reason why the national general assemblies will discuss the different recommendations raised. Then, the International Council will examine these recommendations in June in order to follow-up, to implement and to schedule them.