

Health Systems Action Network



STEERING COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS MEETING

BETHESDA, USA

January 8-12, 2007

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List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
CIDA	Canadian Agency for International Development
DFID	Department for International Development
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization
GFATM	Global Fund to Fight AIDS Tuberculosis and Malaria
GHC	Global Health Council
GHIs	Global Health Initiatives
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
HSAN	Health Systems Action Network
IHEA	International Health Economics Association
LoI	Letter of Inquiry
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
SIDA	Swedish Agency for International Development
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

The Health Systems Action Network (HSAN), which is a global network of professionals committed to strengthening health systems through effective involvement of diverse stakeholders and better management of resources that is guided by evidence, is still a network very much in development.

This report summarizes the proceedings of a meeting of HSAN Steering Committee co-chairs that was held at the Abt Associates Inc. offices in Bethesda, Maryland, USA from 8-12 January 2007. The aim of this meeting was to galvanize the momentum that had been gained since the August 2007 formative meeting in Toronto Canada and the subsequent online discussion among the HSAN membership since then. The Bethesda meeting set out an ambitious agenda that aimed at finalizing the formation of the HSAN as a legal entity, exploring hosting options for the nascent organization, finalization of the by laws, drafting of a Year One Work Plan for HSAN and the initialization of the process of writing funding proposals for organizational development as well as support of activities outlined in the Year One Work Plan.

With the assistance of a committed team of individuals from various organizations including Abt Associates, Broad Branch Associates, Training Resources Group and USAID, the objectives of this meeting were accomplished.

This report summarizes the achievements of this meeting. The challenge now is for the network to forge ahead, solicit support from key stakeholders and most importantly deliver on the objectives it has set itself to achieve during this first year of its existence in order to gain the much needed credibility.

1. Background to the Health Systems Action Network (HSAN)

Making poor countries health systems work effectively is arguably one of the biggest challenges that faces the global health community and one of the impediments to success of the many Global Health Initiatives (GHIs) that have recently been launched to tackle various diseases like HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria that are rampant in the developing world. Despite a widely acknowledged appreciation for the importance of strong health systems in achieving targeted health outcomes, the frameworks of many of the current GHIs do not adequately address health systems strengthening with the result that poor countries face a real risk of failing to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

At country level, one often finds a fragmented approach to implementation of GHIs with lack of coordination across a range of sectors affecting health service delivery. Additionally, there is currently no platform for developing countries' health systems stakeholders to influence the priorities and strategies of GHIs which means that what is designed with the best of intentions may actually not work if the realities on the ground in individual target countries are not put into perspective.

The idea of providing this platform through the formation of a health systems action network was conceived due to the realized need to focus on health systems strengthening at a global level. In April 2005, the World Health Organization convened a meeting of donors and advocates in Montreux, Switzerland with the aim of focusing on what could be done to create a forum that would serve as a collective voice for health systems strengthening. Since this time, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Department for International Development (DFID), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Canadian International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDA) have shown great interest in helping HSAN emerge. The call for action to strengthen health systems was also echoed during the 16th International AIDS Conference meeting in Toronto at which Bill Clinton, Bill Gates and other global leaders clearly identified weak health systems as an overriding constraint to realizing the goals of HIV/AIDS and other global health initiatives.

From August 18th – 19th 2006, USAID supported a meeting in Toronto, Canada that brought together thirty-one health systems leaders and practitioners from the developing world. The participants agreed to launch a Health System Action Network (HSAN) to increase understanding at both the global and country level of the importance of strong health systems to achieve urgent health priorities. HSAN will share what is known across countries by linking health systems leaders through a global network and will provide input to global and donor initiatives so that programs best serve country priorities. The Toronto meeting drew policymakers, clinicians, economists, human resource professionals, pharmacists, and journalists chosen through a highly competitive international process from over 400 applications to discuss health systems strengthening needs not being met by other initiatives. Participants came from Bangladesh, Chile, Costa Rica, Georgia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Russia, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, and Uganda and represented the public and private sectors, academia, civil society, and the media. They were selected for their vision, the quality of their ideas, and their potential to champion the development of the network.

Through a participative process, participants clarified the vision and mission of HSAN, identified its value added, determined priority targets for the next two years, outlined a very preliminary plan of action. Participants also chose an interim steering committee for HSAN that consists of 19 members from all regions of the world and is headed by three co-chairs.

Participants agreed that HSAN will be a leading Global Network facilitating the development of equitable, accountable, and sustainable health systems for improved health outcomes. It was envisaged that in its first two years, HSAN should educate stakeholders and advocate for investing in strong health systems, enhance access to information about what works, link together country based health systems leaders across the globe, and develop a system to measure, track, and compare country progress toward strengthening of their health systems.

From January 8th –12th 2007, a follow up meeting of the three HSAN co-chairs was convened at the Abt Associates offices in Bethesda, Maryland USA. The aim of this meeting was to finalize the formation of the Health Systems Action Network (HSAN) as well as to draft a Year One Work Plan for the organization and to begin the process of writing a funding proposal. Details of the meeting agenda are presented below.

2. Agenda for January 2007 HSAN Co-Chairs Meeting

Venue: Abt Associates Inc, 4800 Montgomery Lane, Suite 600 Bethesda, MD 20814, USA

Participants:

- HSAN Steering Committee Co-Chairs (LeeNah Hsu; Alexa Khan and Samson Kironde)

Resources:

- Rena Eichler (Broad Branch Associates); Nancy Pielemeier (Abt Associates); Karen Cavanaugh (USAID/Washington); Bob Emrey (USAID/Washington); Michael Kitay (Abt Associates legal counsel) and Suzanne Rainey (Forum One)

Facilitator:

Kathy Alison (Training Resources Group)

Meeting Objectives

- Finalization of HSAN bylaws:
 - Mission, vision, leadership, membership, secretariat, technical committees, decision-making process, location
 - Agree on timeline for sharing bylaws with membership for final approval
 - Set date when bylaws will take effect
- Development of Year One work plan for HSAN:
 - Review and decision on strategies for turning HSAN as a legal entity
 - Development of a communications plan
 - Development of a fundraising plan and starting work on a funding proposal
 - Development of a web strategy and operational plan
 - Plan for recruitment of new members
- Exploration of options for embedding HSAN into an existing organization in the near term – discuss pros and cons of different types of potential hosting organizations and draft a hosting agreement with the preferred organization
 - Visit potential hosting organizations in Washington (including the Global Health Council, Health Volunteers Overseas, Brookings Institution, Global AIDS Alliance, Abt Associates etc.)
- Explore options for gaining legal status for and housing of HSAN over the longer term
- Brief donors (including CIDA, SIDA, DFID, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and USAID) on HSAN plans and revise plan based on input from donors
- Identify immediate next steps and briefing for members on results of meeting

Expected Results and Products from meeting

- Final By-Laws to be submitted to membership for approval
- One-year work plan for HSAN
- Recommendations for hosting and setting up HSAN as a legal entity
- Draft proposal for securing funding for HSAN
- Networking with donors with HSAN having a better idea of what donors are looking for and how they might support HSAN
- List of immediate next steps and who will follow up

3. Outcomes of Meeting

3.1 Proposed Structure and By Laws of HSAN

Preamble

The Health Systems Action Network (HSAN) is a global network consisting of organizations and individuals of the public, civil society and academics at country, regional and international levels working on strengthening systems that benefit public health. HSAN is organized exclusively for educational, scientific and charitable purposes.

Mission

HSAN is a global network of professionals committed to strengthening health systems through effective involvement of diverse stakeholders and better management of resources that is guided by evidence.

Vision

A leading global network facilitating the development of equitable, accountable and sustainable health systems for improved health outcomes.

Membership

HSAN is open to individuals, organizations and institutions interested in or working on health systems strengthening. The members of HSAN shall have voting rights on the election of officers to its steering committee. Membership dues are waived during HSAN's start-up period as membership is being grown. In the future, the Steering Committee may recommend the establishment of membership dues in order to defray operational expenses. HSAN members will be consulted on the rationale for initiating dues and the proposed process for payment of dues. The Steering Committee will make the decision on how to move forward based on members' opinions.

HSAN Committees

HSAN Steering Committee

Following the establishment of HSAN as a legal entity, a Steering Committee consisting of five members will be elected by the members. These five co-chairs will represent Africa; Latin America and the Caribbean; Central and Eastern Europe; Middle East, South and South-West Asia; as well as East and South East Asia respectively. Government, non-government and academic sectors will be represented on the Steering Committee to ensure balance of inputs and ballots will be designed to reflect the geographic and sectoral representation. The first HSAN steering committee member election shall be held within three months of the incorporation of HSAN. Member voting may be conducted in face-to-face meetings or through e-mail ballots.

The Steering Committee members will serve a term of three years and are eligible to seek re-election for a maximum of two consecutive terms. Candidates for the steering committee can either self-nominate or be nominated by a member. Each candidate will provide a one page statement of what s/he will bring to the Steering Committee.

The three current co-chairs will continue to serve in the first year of the Steering Committee to ensure continuity and consistency of policy in HSAN. The steering committee members are to be elected by majority vote. The Steering Committee is responsible for ensuring that HSAN activities are in line with its vision and mission and provides guidance to HSAN activities and project implementation.

Specifically, the Steering Committee will:

- Review and approve HSAN Annual work plan and amend its activities and objectives of HSAN based on its committees and technical working groups' recommendations.
- Monitor its committees and technical working groups to ensure timely progress of designated activities.
- Strategy and policy development for HSAN
- Appoint new working groups based on HSAN's requirements and scope of operations.
- Select representatives to represent HSAN at specific external functions
- Keep record of its actions and report its results to HSAN members in its Annual Report.
- Convene an Annual meeting of HSAN members

Steering committee meetings may be in-person, by telephone or video conference. Steering Committee members shall serve without salary except they may be reimbursed for expenses when attending HSAN's own or delegated business meetings following the established financial rules and regulations for reimbursement. Unexcused absence of any steering committee member for three meetings shall constitute his/her resignation from the steering committee.

HSAN Standing Committees

HSAN's Standing Committees shall be as follows:

- Advocacy, Communication and Networking Committee (which also includes the Membership Working Group)
- Research, Monitoring, Evaluation and Technical Assistance Committee
- Strategy & Resource Mobilization Committee

Each committee may appoint technical working groups as required from time to time. Should additional standing committees be needed, it will be determined by HSAN's Steering Committee.

A. Advocacy, Communications and Networking Committee

- Articulate overall agenda for health systems strengthening and the role HSAN can play in seeking for solutions to the challenges
- Develop a media and advocacy strategy to bring health systems strengthening issues to the fore front of the global health agenda
- Recommend to the Steering Committee the establishment of relationships, linkages and/or communications with individuals or organizations (both public and private) that are important stakeholders in health systems strengthening and have the capacity to influence country and global level policy on health systems strengthening

- Maintain links with other health systems networks and organizations under the directive of the HSAN Steering Committee
- Develop and promote HSAN with media promotional materials
- Improve health systems literacy and create a demand for knowledge including advocacy to remove barriers including macro economic constraints to effective health systems
- Prepare advocacy information for the Steering Committee to dialogue with donors and other stakeholders for improved understanding and use of evidence from health systems research findings
- Serve as a clearing house function (e.g., for collection of relevant documents and resources) and have the responsibility for ensuring that the HSAN website content is up to date and at the cutting edge on health systems strengthening issues, actions, activities and news
- Define a glossary of terms related to health system strengthening to facilitate improved consistency in understanding and use of terms or concepts

B. Research, Monitoring and Evaluation and Technical Assistance Committee

- Maintain an inventory of evaluation methods, indicators and tools used for health systems strengthening programs and liaise with the Health Metrics Network
- Develop a data base of key health systems indicators at country level in collaboration with other networks or alliances.
- Develop tools to guide health systems strengthening
- Develop a comprehensive list of country, regional and international level health systems strengthening experts to serve as referral points for GAVI, WB, GFATM, WHO and others that may require technical assistance
- Provide technical assistance and expertise to organizations and individuals on health systems strengthening
- Develop a tool /framework for assessing the impact of global health initiatives on country level health systems
- Collaborate with the Health Metrics Network, Global Health Work Force Alliance and other networks on country assessment to compile case studies on health systems strengthening
- Provide the Steering Committee with monitoring of HSAN's commitment and tasks to ensure its quality and timely delivery of results. Serve as HSAN's internal monitoring and evaluation foci

C. Strategy & Resource Mobilization Committee

This Committee shall identify potential funding opportunities on health systems strengthening and form proposal development groups based on the type of proposal request. The proposal working groups formed by the Committee are time-limited for each specific proposal to ensure timely production of results and to retain full flexibility to attract best talent from within HSAN as well to acquire needed expertise externally, where necessary.

HSAN will need to develop several priority proposals within 6 months of its incorporation. These include the following:

- Develop funding proposal to support HSAN organizational development
- Develop a 3-5 year resource mobilization plan for HSAN
- Assist or participate in health systems strengthening proposals at country or regional level with GAVI health systems strengthening initiative, GFATM calls, WB Task Team or other relevant networks or organizations and foundations

- Provide technical assistance to organizations/stakeholders to develop health systems strengthening proposals or health systems strengthening assessment, monitoring or evaluation
- Facilitate linkages between donors and applicants

Meetings

HSAN shall hold one annual meeting of its members if funding is available. Notice for the annual HSAN member meeting shall be provided to all members at least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting. The date of the next annual meeting shall be determined at the end of the current annual meeting and announced to members and posted on to the HSAN website (www.hsanet.org). Voting on any items of business, including the election of Steering Committee members, amendments to HSAN Bylaws and other important activity requiring endorsement by HSAN members at large, shall be conducted at HSAN annual meeting.

Amendments

Amendments to the bylaws and policy changes affecting the basic structure of HSAN shall be endorsed by the Steering Committee after consultation with the whole HSAN membership

Decision making process

Member polling will guide the decisions of the Steering Committee

3.2 Hosting Options for HSAN

It was felt that before HSAN could become fully registered and operational as an independent entity, it was necessary for it to work out a temporary hosting arrangement with an already established organization that could nurture HSAN in its infancy, provide space for a small HSAN secretariat, host and maintain the organization’s website as well as be able to accept and manage funding on HSAN’s behalf.

Based on a member survey carried out before the Bethesda meeting, it was agreed that HSAN explore options to immediately register as a non-profit organization [Section 501(c)] company in the United States while at the same time explore options of being hosted by an existing entity in the United States with which HSAN would sign a Memorandum of Understanding. It was agreed by the membership that during this temporary arrangement, HSAN would focus on organizational development, resource mobilization and achievement of some results while at the same time exploring and selecting it’s a permanent locations in developing countries since HSAN would like to be seen as a primarily developing country led and based entity.

In identifying a potential temporary host, several criteria were utilized to identify a potential host and these included the following:

- Having a philosophy, vision, mission and agenda congruent to that of HSAN
- Visibility of organization especially with regard to HSAN’s areas of interest
- Credibility of organization among potential funders of HSAN
- Commitment to the health systems strengthening agenda in developing countries
- Experience in dealing with donor agencies

- Organization's stand regarding receipt of government funds for operations
- Organizational bureaucracy
- Availability of staff within organization who can dedicate time to HSAN related issues
- Comfort level among HSAN members regarding the organization
- Ability of host organization to advance health systems strengthening agenda

Five potential hosts were approached and after discussions with each organization and evaluation by the co-chairs, Abt Associates was chosen as the preferred temporary host of HSAN. A memorandum of understanding was then drawn up between Abt Associates and HSAN and the Abt Associates legal counsel started the process of assisting HSAN to incorporate as a legal not for profit entity in the United States. This process is expected to be completed by the end of January, though the actual award of not-for-profit status as a section 501(c) company may take up to June 2007.

3.3 Draft Year One Work Plan for HSAN

Another key deliverable during the co-chairs' meeting was the development of a draft Year One work plan for HSAN. During Based on earlier discussions that have already been held within the network the team came up with several activities that could be accomplished during the first year (*for planning purposes, this was simply taken as the calendar year of January to December2007*).

The key activities identified are as follows:

- Establish HSAN as a legal entity
- Finalize hosting arrangements for HSAN
- Upgrade HSAN website (www.hsanet.org)
- Create a global community of HSS experts to expand interest and participation and provide relevant information
- Hold a case study writing and skills development workshop
- Hold at least one 'big splash' event
- Explore eligible candidates for regional hubs based on pre-defined criteria
- Develop and begin to implement a global, regional and country level health systems strengthening advocacy strategy
- Conduct resource mobilization

These activities are further detailed out into specific tasks, resource requirements, timelines etc. in the Table below. One challenge regarding the way forward is to identify from the wider HSAN group, a volunteer lead person and working group to champion each activity and see to it that the activity gets done.

Individual HSAN members are expressing interest in taking lead or participating in individual activities and it is anticipated that by mid-February 2007, working groups for each key activity will have been formulated and implementation of the Year One Work Plan will be well underway.

Table: Draft Year One Work Plan for HSAN

Activity	Objectives/ purpose of activity	Specific tasks	Resource required (financial / human)	Major products / milestones	Timeline
<i>Establish HSAN as a legal entity</i>	<p>To formalize the governance, organizational structure and operational procedures for HSAN;</p> <p>To ensure direct access to donor and other resources.</p>	<p>Finalize Mission, bylaws</p> <p>Hire Attorney to develop articles of incorporation, apply for tax exempt status</p> <p>Develop criteria for selection of Board members and procedures / terms of reference</p> <p>Finalize decision re: country in which HSAN should be registered</p> <p>Register HSAN</p>	<p>Legal counsel to go through process of registration</p> <p>Registration Fee</p> <p>Processing costs</p> <p>Admin support to prepare, package, track documents, etc.</p>	<p>Document detailing agreed mission bylaws etc.</p> <p>Draft articles of association</p> <p>Board members appointed</p> <p>HSAN registered as a non profit organization by September 2007</p>	<p>March /April 2007</p>
<i>Finalize hosting arrangement</i>	<p>To facilitate implementation of HSAN's work plan in the short term including access to donor resources.</p>	<p>Review and document pros/cons re: four institutions identified based on identified criteria;</p> <p>Obtain quick feedback from selected donors (USAID, CIDA, SIDA, DFID, Gates) & HSAN members re: advantages / disadvantages of association with identified institutions</p> <p>Draft / review agreement re: Hosting of HSAN</p> <p>Obtain feedback from</p>	<p>Legal Counsel to draft MoU & help negotiate agreement & clarify who will sign MoU (legal proxy)</p> <p>Communications costs</p> <p>Admin support</p>	<p>Final decision on host institution</p>	<p>End of January 2007</p> <p>End of January 2007</p>

Activity	Objectives/ purpose of activity	Specific tasks	Resource required (financial / human)	Major products / milestones	Timeline
		<p>HSAN Steering Committee</p> <p>Approach preferred Host</p> <p>Negotiate & Sign MoU</p>		Final Memorandum of Understanding	End Feb 2007
<i>Upgrade website</i>	<p>To establish a dynamic, flexible, and automated web presence which supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interactive Communication ▪ Knowledge generation and sharing ▪ Information exchange ▪ Build a community of practice ▪ Online learning/conferencing 	<p>Get official ownership of website</p> <p>Determine who will administer / update hsan.org website</p> <p>Identify interim focal point to liaise on website activities</p> <p>Identify and finalize portfolio of online services (e.g. lessons learned database, library services; project material bank of good practice examples; online conferences; events, electronic updates, Blogs, project workspaces, member profiles, consultant clearinghouse etc.)</p> <p>Develop TOR for site upgrade to include content management strategy, infrastructure requirements to support website upgrade and maintenance;</p> <p>Publish RFP re website</p>	<p>Additional resources by securing an institutional support grant</p> <p>Dedicated part-time website administrator</p>	<p>Establish website management working group</p> <p>Update Content of Website – catch-up (e.g. Toronto materials, member bios, link to private workspace, report from Geneva GAVI meeting, and presentation to GAVI etc.)</p> <p>Regular update of website, including content on Health Systems Strengthening</p> <p>Platform upgrade</p>	<p>End of January 2007</p> <p>Monthly</p> <p>Within 6 months</p>

Activity	Objectives/ purpose of activity	Specific tasks	Resource required (financial / human)	Major products / milestones	Timeline
		upgrades (if necessary) Select firm (determine sign off process) Contract firm			End of January 2007
<i>Create a global community of HSS experts to expand interest and participation and provide relevant information</i>	Facilitate a community of practice Facilitate information exchange Facilitate capacity building	Develop web-based & non-web-based outreach strategy to build membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Define Membership criteria ▪ Develop registration process / form ▪ Develop 1-page fact sheet / brochure on HSAN ▪ Develop a brief on benefits of HSAN ▪ Phase I – email 400 plus respondents from Toronto meeting; ▪ Phase II- members communicate with HSS stakeholders in their countries, regions about HSAN and the benefits of joining Link other relevant websites to HSAN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify relevant websites; ▪ Obtain permission ▪ Place links on website ▪ System for refreshing info. 	Admin support (access emails)	Strategy in place Membership increased to 100	Dec 2007

Activity	Objectives/ purpose of activity	Specific tasks	Resource required (financial / human)	Major products / milestones	Timeline
		<p>Define and Host “Ask the Experts” series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify criteria for selection of experts in HS thematic areas and get HSAN member input ▪ Identify potential ‘experts’ and get HSAN member input ▪ Determine whether honorarium /stipend to be paid ▪ Develop structure of program (panel, individual expert, online or offline process) ▪ Obtain member feedback re: selection of issues for ‘experts’ to respond. <p>Manage a question and answer online discussion board</p> <p>Develop quarterly electronic newsletter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Objectives of e-newsletter ▪ Develop format for electronic newsletter; ▪ Identify ‘staff’ writers ▪ Identify topic areas ▪ Editorial policy ▪ Process for identifying content and approving same; ▪ Development of dissemination strategy 		<p>Four or more relevant websites linked to HSAN website</p>	<p>Sept 2007</p>

Activity	Objectives/ purpose of activity	Specific tasks	Resource required (financial / human)	Major products / milestones	Timeline
		Post info. on upcoming events on website		2 Quarterly e-newsletters	June and December 2007
<i>Hold a case study writing and skills building workshop</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To generate content on HSS from field experience ▪ To teach HSS practitioners skills of how to write case studies and success stories from their field experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mobilize resources for this activity (e.g. include this activity as an element of the institutional grant proposal or as a stand-alone proposal) ▪ Develop guidelines for writing of case studies ▪ Identify workshop facilitator(s) ▪ Develop criteria for eligibility to attend workshop ▪ Advertise widely for applications ▪ Constitute review panel to choose best applications ▪ Identify workshop venue and work out logistics ▪ Summarize workshop outputs and disseminate appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3-4 person working group to plan / manage event ▪ Grant to support workshop logistics (including venue hire, transportation and per diem for participants, accommodation costs etc.) ▪ Technical resource persons to act as workshop facilitators ▪ Administrative support to coordinate requisite logistics ▪ Secretarial support to summarize workshop outputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case study writing guidelines developed ▪ Criteria for eligibility to attend developed and disseminated ▪ Finalists identified and contacted and preparations for their attendance made ▪ Final case studies at end of workshop ▪ HSS Case study series developed and disseminated in hard copy or online 	Final Case Studies disseminated by March 2008
<i>Hold at least one 'big splash' event</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To publicize HSAN's work to a wider audience ▪ To attract more membership ▪ To increase potential donor interest in HSAN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mobilize resources for this activity (e.g. include this activity as an element of the institutional grant proposal or as a stand-alone proposal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3-4 person working group to plan / organize event (including a journalist to manage media relations, technical resource persons to develop content and a person to handle the logistics) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreed upon content for 'big splash' event ▪ Appropriate 'tag on' conference identified ▪ Panelists for 'big splash' event identified & contacted ▪ At least 4 major media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Timeline for event dependent on when a major conference to which this event is to be tagged to is going to be held

Activity	Objectives/ purpose of activity	Specific tasks	Resource required (financial / human)	Major products / milestones	Timeline
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify appropriate conference on which to tag 'big splash' event, either as part of agenda or as satellite activity (e.g. IHEA, GHC) ▪ Develop appropriate content for 'big splash' event ▪ Assemble and invite relevant panelists to participate in 'big splash' event ▪ Inform wider audience at conference appropriately ▪ Ensure media presence at 'big splash' event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grant to facilitate panelists to attend conference to which 'big splash' event is being tagged to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> houses pre-briefed about event and in physical attendance at the event ▪ Publicize event in mainstream health news venues 	
<p><i>Explore eligible candidates for regional hubs based on pre-defined criteria</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To create functional regional - level focal point (individual or institution) through which HSAN can operate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop criteria for eligibility of selection of Regional HSAN hub ▪ Approach / identify potential candidates ▪ Discuss benefits and costs of hosting with each candidate ▪ Make recommendations to HSAN Steering Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working Group of 2-3 persons per region to take lead on process ▪ Facilitate / identify funds in case potential hosts need to physically be visited by members of the working group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommendations of at least 2 potential HSAN hosts per region ▪ Budgetary analysis of what it would cost HSAN to be hosted by selected organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By November 2007, a host should have been identified for each region

3.4 Writing of funding proposals

Another key activity that was accomplished during the co-chairs meeting was the initialization of the process of proposal writing. To be operational HSAN will need organizational development funds as well as funds to conduct some of the activities proposed in its Year One work plan. To this end, the co-chairs identified several potential funding organizations for HSAN and plan to engage these organizations actively over the next few months to ascertain whether these organizations will be willing to fund some of the proposed activities.

At the moment, USAID is supporting the hosting arrangement and registration of HSAN as a legal entity through support from the Health Systems 20/20 project. HSAN plans to submit a letter of inquiry (LoI) to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for potential funding of the organization's activities and we have begun discussions with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to explore support for a HSAN satellite publicity event during the 34th Annual International Conference on Global Health to be held from May 29th – 2nd June in Washington DC. We will initiate discussions with other donors during the first half of 2007.

4. Next Steps

Overall, the HSAN co-chairs held a very successful meeting in early January 2007 and the planned items of the agenda were all accomplished. The challenge now is to continue the momentum and galvanize action among the HSAN membership as well as the international community to enable this nascent network to fully become operational. Though very much a volunteer based network with an additional challenge of having a mainly virtual mode of operation due to the distant geographical locations of the membership, HSAN hopes to utilize the current good will and realization of the need to focus on health systems strengthening to be able to contribute ably to the global and country level agenda over the coming year.

Some unique strengths of the network include the level of commitment of its members as well as the various range of expertise in health systems management that they can bring to bear to the current challenges if they can speak with one voice. Our hope is that during this year, we can be able to attract a sufficient level of funding from potential donors to enable HSAN to achieve its set objectives.



Working Group Photograph during the HSAN Co-Chairs Meeting, January 2007