



Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development  
General Assembly 6 Nov, 14



**ACBAR General Assembly**  
**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup>, Nov 2014**  
**ACBAR Conference Room, Kabul**



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**Agenda:**

8:00 – 9:00	French breakfast and Registration
9:00– 9:05	Opening Prayers, Hamidullah Ahmadi
9:05- 9:10	Welcome and explanation overall, Mrs. Helene Vidon, SC vice chair
9:10- 9:20	Minutes Last GA, Vice Chairman ACBAR
9:20-9:40	Briefing of Nine Months Report 2014, Mrs. Helene, vice chair
9:40-9: 50	ACBAR overall financial situation 2014 and Budget for 2015, Ahmadi, treasurer
9:50-10:00	Questions/answers
10:00-10:15	Tea Break
10:15- 10:40	ACBAR work plan (field, capacity building, chart, budget and strategy) and update on <i>Do Not Forget Afghanistan</i> Campaign, Justine Piquemal, Director
10:40-11:00	New applicant NGOs' presentations
11:00-11:20	New Steering committee applicants
11:20-12h30	Open session with MOFA, MoEco and MoFIN, presentations and questions
12:30-2:00	Lunch in ACBAR Garden



**Welcome: (Ms. Helene Vidon)**

After the recitation of some verses of the Holy Quran, Ms. Helene Vidon vice chair of the SC led and welcomed the vast participation of Agency members in the annual General Assembly and presented apologies behalf chairperson (Mr. Fazel Rabi Haqbeen) who could not attend GA due to his health issues. Later one, a minute of silence took place for Mr. Nando AAO Director who has passed on few months back.

Ms. Helene has shortly briefed the agenda points and program officially started with first agenda point, approval of last General Assembly minutes.

The quorum met as 71 at 9 am and Ms. Hélène, the Vice chair thanked ACBAR Team's effective job for the GA preparation.

**1. Minutes of last GA**

Chairman, Ms. Hélène reminded NGO colleagues of two points validated in last GA, 1) In review to ACBAR status of operation, it was agreed "If a member organization is one year in arrear of payment of the annual membership fee, After a warning letter from the Director, membership will then be automatically terminated". 2) GA Participants were agreed on creation of advisory boards at field level which works well in JAL and Mzr on the bases of feedbacks SC received, So far. Thirdly, she pointed to ACBAR chart that validated with two Deputies second/first most focused on advocacy issues and Government relations which would allow the Director to work more from remote and participate in international conferences easily.

The minutes were approved by the maximum majority.

**2. Briefing of Nine Months Report 2014, Mrs. Helene, vice chair**

Ms. Hélène Vidon, briefed the floor with the achievements and developments of ACBAR in terms of Coordination and Networking, Advocacy, Challenges, and future Initiatives.

First of all, ACBAR is an Umbrella Body exists to support members and to deliver services to NGOs, that goes to number of activities of which the most important is the implementation of strategy 2013 – 2016, this is an ongoing process and on track so far and ACBAR is on the stage of preparation. Discussion and negotiations with Donors to support ACBAR and respectively ACBAR support its members. Currently, ACBAR is in negotiation with DFID for support project that include training activities between NGOs and INGOs for capacity building.

The new chart validated in last GA has 13<sup>th</sup> Mar, 2014 been implemented with creation/opening of new job positions. And, by gaining DFID project there will be some adjustment in the chart. Beside this, ACBAR is working on website update fully functional and more professional.

Regarding the SC functioning, it has been working well. We had a quorum for all the meetings and usually received feedbacks, comments and approval from those who could not attend through the emails.

ACBAR has played its active role and acted as mediator between NGOs and government and NGOs and Donors and had a neutral role facilitating such discussions with no specific issue which is again an ongoing process when/where needed.

As a core competence, coordination is progressing well and luckily ACBAR was very active to work with the civil societies as it was a gap in last. ACBAR produced the position papers for



London conference and through the transparent election process, candidates were identified that could go and attend the London conference. Further to this, a lot of common work in terms of facilitation has been done by ACBAR.

In regard to ACBAR regular meetings organized and attended, ACBAR was very active in humanitarian issues and hosted the monthly Afghan Humanitarian Forum (AHF) meeting and participated in all HCT and CHF advisory board meetings and also active in ADF, and in Advocacy Working Group (AWG) in particular quite related on preparation of London papers for last few months.

Of course, Partnership is also maintained and developed with other networking bodies inside and outside Afghanistan especially some common activities in partnership with BAAG, ENNA, US-Interaction, Japan network, John Hopkins University and with Health Care in Danger network based in Geneva.

In relation to all these coordination, collaboration and networking, ACBAR has been constantly advocating for transparent use of number of funds and is working with Donors to ensure that those funds are used in proper way in Afghanistan that include the ERF, CHF, working on the CHAP process for 2015, and also involved in Sehat process and interacting with some Donors to present the strategy to liaise between NGOs and Donors.

As a continued advocacy and part of information, ACBAR still produces and disseminating its monthly newsletter, participating in international conferences in/outside Afghanistan such as (UNHCR/SPHERE/ Consortium /Access of health / ICVA) and etc...

ACBAR also produce automatic and regular statements/papers on issues and constraints that humanitarian agencies/workers face here in Afghanistan. Apart to this, some special papers for instance to NATO on forces intrusion into health facilities.

The vice chair further updated participants of advocacy activities and fund raising opportunities been done through publications and workshops namely (Refugees workshops at regional and Kabul level, Donors I, II, and Donor III which will held 8<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2014).

ACBAR is mediating more between NGOs and Government as ACBAR Team had organized numerous meetings with different line Ministries such as MoFIN, FoFA, MoEC, MRRD/NSP, IDLG, MoIn, and MAIL following with close follow up and contacts purposely to solve NGOs problems and so far nearly 100 NGOs had been supported either on Visa, Work permit or Tax issues. ACBAR is active in rolling over as a mediator at provincial level as well.

#### **Challenges 2014/15 and solutions;**

- To re-open ACBAR Herat office, we need members' support, said vice chair.
- Due to lack of time, that mostly consuming with workshops and meetings, ACBAR central staff could not provide support to field staff to supervise the issues and problems being raised at field level.
- Low level of members' participation in ACBAR regular meetings. So, if members remain committed and show up in meetings that will help efficiency of the meetings by all meanings.
- Turnover of ACBAR and Members' staff makes it difficult to follow up the activities that actually repeat information at times.



- ACBAR has planned to contact new Government on relevant issues but due lengthy election process and announcement, and yet having no cabinet stop us having a chance to contact new authorities.

### ***Future Initiatives;***

- ACBAR normally keep on its activities in Mazar and Jalalabad and at provincial level following its activities with advisory boards for ahead betterment.
- NGO associate membership who had been entitled for associate who could not meet the criteria which haven't worked well, ACBAR cancel after one year automatically their membership.
- Opening reserve account, which will support the organization while it faces lack of fund.
- Developing relations with international networks and institutions.
- ACBAR has plan to conduct a huge international campaign under the name " Do not forget Afghanistan" DNFA which would take place at least in 22 capitals on 24<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2014.

The 9 months Narrative Report has been accepted by the maximum Majority.

### **3. ACBAR overall financial situation 2014 and Budget for 2015, Ahmadi, treasurer**

Mr. Ahmadi, the treasurer and SC member gave some highlights on overall financial situation for 2013 and 2014. The detailed files had already been shared with all members.

ACBAR 2014 forecasted budget is: USD 626,354 from this budget 47% are being covered by Tawanmandi, 17% by Peace Winds Japan, 0.31% by MSI "Management systems international" & NRC and 37% by ACBAR membership fee and advertisement fee, therefore at the end of fiscal year ACBAR would be with surplus of "\$7,385".

On update to yearly income and expenditure for past 9 months, the closing balance at the beginning of Jan, 2014 was 56035 USD while total income in this period reaches to 693,477 USD that includes funds received from Donors and other income sources, and the total expenses reported by ACBAR for the period was 570,574.5 USD.

PWJ is a three year project with objective of capacity building and providing support to Afghan civil society organizations with total fund 558,717 USD divided in to three phases and ACBAR financial team accordingly provide its budget for each year. The project will end 28<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2016.

TAW is also three year project purposely under implementation for empowering and strengthening role of civil societies in Afghanistan with funding amount 1,464,061 USD divided in to three phases and ACBAR proceeds accordingly. MSI was a project with amount of 10000 US Dollars which is completed and report submitted to Donor. The small grant with amount USD 1484 received from NRC for trainings is successfully done and report submitted.

It was also stated that membership and announcement fees is the core pillar for financial sustainability of ACBAR and so far 101 out of 128 agency members paid their fees for the year 2014. In total, 207,793 USD as membership fee and 20194 USD as advertisement income



traced to ACBAR account till end of Sep, 2014. The membership fee is much more important both for ACBAR and its members; therefore he called on non-paid members to pay their fees on timely manner.

Lastly, the treasurer thanked to Director and ACBAR Team who financially secured the organization. Presently, ACBAR is financially good if compared to last years and have enough fund, income sources and potential Donors this year and for the years 2015/16.

At the end of presentation, the Financial Report was anonymously accepted by the maximum Majority.

Ms. Justine, ACBAR Director presented budget for the year 2015 with no specific change in budget plan for 2015 but might add some adjustments once DFID contract is signed. ACBAR will do evaluation of the staff in weeks coming based which salary will get upgraded for all staff with 10% COLA.

Director briefed participants of the change in salary of two expats, herself Director and Deputy/Advocacy Manager as they uses guest house and pay tax here in Afghanistan.

On TAW line, ACBAR will recruit some consultants (expats) to support ACBAR in terms of all strategies for coming years. Beside this, ACBAR would like to have someone helping ACBAR for reviewing advocacy strategy financed by ACBAR, said Director.

On the maintenance side, ACBAR would like to purchase one large generator which is highly important in case of electricity failure, and will charge it on DFID project.

At field level, ACBAR has sub-offices in Mazar and Jalalabad, having fund for Herat office but lacking the capacity to re-open office in west.

#### **ACBAR replies to the questions;**

- ACBAR do consult and receive members' feedbacks in all planning and policies and then being validated in General Assembly as it's done for ACBAR strategy in May, 2013.

- ACBAR can stay open if signed DFID contract, and on fund issues ACBAR can keep its activities for coming six years even in case no outside fund from Donors. And, to avoid capacity gaps in activities each staff should stay at least 2 months on their positions after resign to handover his/her responsibility in a well manner.

- Dr. James member of the SC suggested the point of ACBAR sustainability as the agenda point in upcoming meetings to negotiate "How to increase ACBAR membership".

- To clarify, the reason of having recruited high number of staff in ACBAR is to implement the big project received from TAW in a very professional way and added that many of them carry over as project based staff, said SC members.

- On connection with networking bodies, ACBAR do share information with ENNA and relevantly with other bodies on Daily and monthly bases based on MoU signed with them but the gap of communication is from ENNA to ACBAR as they mostly keep the info in Brussels. Anyhow, ACBAR never participated in EU parliament without ENNA, and never visited US parliament without US-Interaction. She emphasized on extending the foreign relation of ACBAR with abroad networks.



- *In comparison to last two year, Membership has increased but soon ACBAR will terminate membership of 5 NGOs who did not pay their fees for the year 2013.*

To avoid losing capacity, Dr. Fareed member of SC recommended recruiting two/three staff on permanent contracts.

A lady worked closely with ACBAR in KPK, suggested maintaining a functional library having all trainings material same as ACBAR had them 20 years back. The point was welcomed by ACBAR Director.

The annual budget for the year 2015 was anonymously approved with maximum majority of GA participants.

**4. ACBAR work plan (field, capacity building, chart, budget and strategy) and update on Don Not Forget Afghanistan Campaign, Justine Piquemal, Director**

Although the details were distributed electronically to all members, Ms. Justine shortly went through some ACBAR work plan related points for instance update about the strategy 2013/16, Actions point for 2015, the new Chart, Donors Update and creating Reserve account. The new strategy mostly focus on advocacy activities as ACBAR lately produced its own position papers for upcoming London conference and being very active in preparation to L2 from May, 14 to date. ACBAR currently, presents the papers to Embassies in Kabul face to face.

ACBAR with support of TAW facilitate and finance 9 elected delegates to go London in order to represent CSOs in Afghanistan relevantly.

Relation with Donors is improved, and ACBAR keep the Doors open to Donors for free to come and present their strategy in ACBAR conference room same as ECHO recently given strategy presentation to its partner organizations. Moreover, ACBAR arrange and attend meetings with Donors on weekly bases and organize workshops with them on semi-annual bases specifically Donor I, II and III which will conduct on 8<sup>th</sup> Dec, 2014.

ACBAR had numerous meetings with line Ministries during last 9 months and had raised the points behalf agency members with no NGO name. ACBAR still have weekly relations and action points follow up both with MoEco and MoFin/MTO to tackle the gaps and overcome the existing obstacles.

On regard to policy implications, ACBAR undertaken review of Labor law, Income tax law, Visa law and NGOs law and would likely want the presence of new Government to review and cooperate in amendment of policies.

As stated before, by means of second pillar of the policy, ACBAR is involved in aid effectiveness for a transparent use of the fund with Government, Donors and finally with the NGOs that currently includes ERF, CHF, HIP, USAID and On-budget process. ACBAR is supporting civil society (trainings) to be sustainable and so far ACBAR provided 11 trainings on afghan law, 3 trainings on SPHERE and promoting the CoC. Members were requested to strictly follow the Law based on the code of conduct since it seriously affects ACBAR and its function. If an NGO member proceeds through illegal ways, ACBAR will then directly dismiss their membership.

ACBAR do strive capacitating national NGOs as recently has two small grants with DFID for two Afghan NGOs (member or none members) who are very active in humanitarian activities and will work together with WHH.



During project period for (4 years), ACBAR and WHH will follow the processes of their activities in terms of bank account, human resources, recruitment, taxation, and capacities, to enable them how better they could apply to CHF fund themselves.

On PWJ line, ACBAR have two other small grants of 10000 USD for the period of 4 months exactly for advocacy related issues. These grants will be opened soon only to ACBAR members. She further added that ACBAR is keen in facilitating/capacitating agency members to have access to funds as ACBAR is part of *Think Tank* for fund in Afghanistan.

Besides being active in humanitarian sector, considering the part of Development in accordance with NPPs is somehow important both for ACBAR and members. Therefore, we should work together and cooperating each other. We would re-start such meetings soon and in particular, Development agencies were asked for their support, ACBAR itself will work on access part of NPPs.

ACBARs' core action points for 2015 is to continue the work plan, work on National policy (NGO law, labor law and visa law, income tax law), implementing new programs (Japan and DFID) and new management.

On the coordination and facilitation part, ACBAR actively keep monthly meetings, translating and provide detailed explanation of GiROA information, play its role as mediator between members and GiROA, Donors and private company and publish its monthly Newsletter which mostly reflex ACBAR and members' activities at international level.

Due to time or resources limitations for NGOs, from now on, ADF and Govt meetings will be held the same single day following each other, AWG possibly once per two months while AHF, Director meetings normally at monthly bases.

*It was agreed to have a consultancy meeting on members' demand where NGOs can raise the points that what actually they need and could be done through ACBAR. The meeting will possibly held in Jan 2015, and the point will get discussed in next Director meeting as well.*

Director also presented the new chart enactive if DFID contract signed, if not, then ACBAR will keep old chart approved by GA in last General Assembly in Mar, 2014.

ACBAR will create reserve account based on ACBAR reserve policy and USD 5000 alongside membership and advertisement fees will directly trace to this account on yearly bases.

*Replies to questions;*

- *It's important to have two Deputies, one for government relations and the second one on international relations, added to the chart due to two separate functions.*

The work plan was accepted by the maximum majority. And, Director announced that next General Assembly for April, 2015.

## **5. New Members:**

The following four new members who completed the criteria were approved and accepted by the maximum majority except (YAAR and WAA who got some abstentions),

1. **PIN (People In Need):** Czech NGO, working in five programs namely NSP, Agriculture programs, urban poverty (livelihood, self-help groups) NRM programs and emergency since 2001, active in 6 provinces in Afghanistan. Registered with MoEco under license No: 033





and implementing the programs by the support of their staff 250 in number with budget 5 million USD per year.

2. **YAAR (Youth Assembly for Afghanistan Rehabilitation):** YAAR is a national NGO registered with the MoECON under license No: 157 and established in 1994. On rehabilitation side, they are working on villages' level on streets, water supply (Semi deep wells), and schools' construction. Its current budget for ongoing projects in Shabughan and Sar-e-Pul is 152,727 US Dollars.
3. **NCRO (New Consultancy and Relief Organization):** This NGO established under license No: 2563 in 1993 with mission to assist Afghans to achieve their basic needs and to recover infrastructure of water resources and to improve access for vulnerable stratum of the country.
4. **WAA (Women Assistance Association):** WAA is national NGO established since 2002 under license No: 666 with objective to empower women. Currently WAA implement projects in Paktya which is funded by Tawanmandi through CPAU and the budget amount is 43000 USD.

Participants requested ACBAR if they could possibly provide a page of info in hard on new NGOs profiles whom they are interested to gain ACBAR membership and to be added it to GA docs packages which would help members to easily take decision for their membership.

ACBAR Director announced proposing two new policies (*on gain of ACBAR membership*) which will get shared with members by near soonest and to be approved in next Director meeting.

#### **6. Election New SC members for two positions**

Ms. Helene asked two members who sent their nomination replacing two empty positions in the SC. Being member of the Steering Committee, Directors SCA and HTAC have committed for their assistance and contribution to SC in order to help NGOs and Afghan communities through this structure.

SCA and HTAC were elected as SC members for the period of coming six months while in next GA ACBAR will have full SC elections.

#### **7. Open session with MoEco and MoLSAMD**

Vice chair shortly introduced ACBAR General Assembly being held twice per year and welcomed to the reps of MoEco and MoLSAMD to ACBAR GA. Honorable representatives introduced themselves and the floor later on was officially handed over to them as an open session with NGO colleagues.

Mr. Basirat head of NGOs Department appreciated ACBAR inviting them for such a noble session of ACBAR General Assembly. He admired NGOs for the progress and achievements made during past decade besides having mass of challenges ahead. NGOs worked well in terms of job opportunities, infrastructure, capacity building, and the creation of working environment for women for enabling them to work at any stage.

He wished that the new Government of Afghanistan would have a policy or guideline for NGOs through which we can further improve our relations in terms of coordination and information.



He requested NGOs to also observe legal provisions and further improve their relations as we both (Afghan govt and NGOs) working for same people with same objectives.

As known that the present Code of Conduct and NGOs law still owes gaps and challenges so in order for covering such points, he requested ACBAR and CPI to take this point as great agenda, setting together with them, review the provisions of the law and find ways toward solutions as the current law could not answer NGOs needs entirely. For instance,

- *NGOs are not categorized, and they are a kind of generalized organizations doing each project in any sector, while each NGO should be professional and of experience in a sector or two.*

Finally he proposed gaining membership of any umbrella organization to non-members NGOs yet not registered as ACBAR, AWN or ANCB members which would enable line Ministries in particular MoEco reach them easily rather than contacting each NGO individually in terms of information sharing, coordination and discussions.

At the end, he committed supporting NGOs community whether or not stayed on his position in upcoming government.

ACBAR proposed having a small session of expertise (national/International) before end of 2014, to discuss the law, cover the existing gaps and bring the amendment accordingly.

Mr. Shahidullah Safi “Director of work permits issuance Department for expats” also appreciated ACBAR providing a chance to MoLSAMD in GA session where colleagues can directly talk on work permit issues for expats.

#### ***Answer to questions;***

Mr. Safi replied the questions with good news; that MoLSAMD has finalized the new guideline/ procedure which will soon be approved by president of Afghanistan. The guideline crosses the lengthiness and eases the process for expats simply obtain their work permits as followings;

- *With new procedures, expats will obtain their work permit by only enclosing the copy of NGOs registration certificate with MoEco, passports, and an introduction letter from his/her office, and these docs will go directly to Passport Department. The three Depts (AISA, MoFA, MoIn) are excluded in the process, in new procedures.*
- *With approbation of new procedure, from then on, expats will obtain 12 months visa based which VIDE will issue work permit validated for one year.*
- *Beside this, in general, all Directors and Deputy Directors have the right bring their families her in Afghanistan if they want. In this case, they need no work permit at all.*
- *Law is for all, but countries who they not issue working license to Afghans, then the Government of Afghanistan legally has the right to re-act accordingly.*