

PaRD General Assembly of Members 2018

24 - 27 June 2018
@ Château de Bossey, Switzerland

Brief Report: Outcome, Decisions and Recommendations

1. The first General Assembly of Members was held from 24 -27 June at the Ecumenical Centre “Château de Bossey” in Switzerland. 81 participants followed the invitation of the World Council of Churches as host and EDA/ SDC as sponsor to discuss, finalize and approve the governance structure and to establish next steps for this multi-stakeholder-partnership. The meeting began with a welcome by the hosts and organizers, followed by an interactive panel discussion featuring Louise Aubin (Deputy Director Division of International Protection UNHCR), Fahad Abualnaser (General Director KAI-CIID), Ambassador Jalel Chelba (Head Civil Society Division AU-CIDO) and Mohamed Ashmawey (President Beyaz Eller) on the topic of “Multi-sector collaborations with faith communities and critical importance to current challenges”. Additional working sessions focused on (1.) the three PaRD work-streams; (2.) a brief report on PaRD activities since the last annual meeting; (3.) a joint vision and goal for PaRD; (4.) knowledge exchange; and (5.) areas of joint engagement, including joint advocacy events.
2. Prior to the General Assembly, the PaRD 5+5+1 Task Group had developed working documents on (1.) the vision and governance structure for PaRD; and (2.) Terms of Reference for the Steering Group, the work-streams and the PaRD secretariat. These documents were shared with all members and partners for consultation and endorsement within the different membership constituencies. Additional comments and amendments were tabled during the General Assembly and will be incorporated in the final document on the governance structure. PaRD members endorsed and adopted the new vision and governance structure for PaRD as well as the Terms of Reference. The respective documents will be shared with all members and will also be published on the PaRD website.

Main Outcomes of Governance Discussion:

- a. PaRD membership categories no longer distinguish between PaRD members and PaRD partners. Instead, PaRD members are governmental and intergovernmental entities and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)/ Faith-based Organisations (FBOs).
- b. PaRD is governed by a Steering Group (SG) of 10-12 members, including a maximum of 3 representatives from governmental entities, a maximum of 3 representatives from multilateral entities and a maximum of 6 representatives from CSOs/FBOs, as well as the Head of the PaRD secretariat ex officio. Its main purpose is to provide guidance and oversight for PaRD membership and its secretariat. The new Steering Group was elected by the three respective membership constituencies and confirmed by acclamation by the plenary. The elected SG members for the coming two years are:
USAID (vacancy), BMZ, MoFA Denmark for the Governmental entities;
UNFPA, KAICIID, AU for the intergovernmental entities; and
ACT Alliance, IRW, WCC, Arigatou International, CYNESA and the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) for the CSOs/FBOs.

- c. The Steering Group elects 3 co-chairs for a period of 2 years to handle its day to day business. The newly elected Steering Group confirmed ACT Alliance / represented by Nick Clarke, UNFPA / represented by Azza Karam and USAID / (vacancy/ representative to be announced) as co-chairs for the Steering Group in the coming two years.
 - d. PaRD aims at greater and institutionalised communication and coordination between secular and non-secular actors, while fostering new synergies through cooperation and collaboration of its members. Areas of joint engagement are knowledge exchange, capacity building and joint advocacy.
 - e. Work-streams are lead and managed by at least two members (co-leads) of at least two different membership groups and develop their own annual work programme based on the vision/ mission of PaRD and the commonly agreed main strategic plan of PaRD. Members may decide which work-stream to join and the membership of each work-stream should have representation of the three different membership groups.
- 3. PaRD is still a growing multi-stakeholder-partnership with 85 members, 65 CSOs/FBOs, 12 intergovernmental entities and 8 governmental entities, as of June 2018. A common membership growth strategy, which primarily focuses on new members from the Global South and beyond traditional DAC-donors, will be jointly implemented by members and secretariat. Means of cooperation with multi-FBO-networks (e.g. The Moral Imperative initiative) are currently being explored and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Joint Learning Initiative is being developed in order to use synergies between both organisations/ networks.
- 4. The financial report 2017 and funding strategy 2018-21 has been shared and is available for all members. Participants approved the budget for 2018 and 2019. As the current funding of PaRD by BMZ and USAID is expiring in 2018/2019, members are encouraged to support the secretariat with broadening the donor base and securing additional funding, including funding for specific initiatives. The Steering Group has formed a sub-committee that will focus on budget and finances of PaRD. The Budget & Finance Sub-committee consists of Mohammed Abu-Nimer/ KAICIID, Atallah Fitzgibbon/ IRW, Hanno Spitzer/ BMZ (as chair) and Ulrich Nitschke from the secretariat.
- 5. The second afternoon of the event was exclusively devoted to the knowledge exchange among and between members. In the Open Forum, 18 participants seized this opportunity to present their initiatives and projects with a focus on fostering cooperation among members. The thematic foci of the session were the current PaRD work-streams, other SDGs, as well as joint initiatives reflecting PaRD's vision and mission. Further information on the various initiatives and projects will be uploaded in the online fora of the PaRD website.
- 6. PaRD continues to work in mainly three areas: knowledge exchange, capacity building as well as advocacy/ policy advice. Moreover, members continue to focus on three thematic work-streams for 2018. Members used the opportunity of the General Assembly to discuss and revise the draft work-plans, to establish next steps and to identify key advocacy events for each work-stream.
 - a. **SDG 16 “Sustaining Peace”** – Co-leads: UNOGP, CRS, Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers

While all twelve SDG 16 targets address important aspects of the issue, four in particular have been most commonly identified as priorities by members for the period of the workplan: 16.1/16.2/16.8/16.A. Four core activities were identified: (1) Support the Fez Plan of Action, (2) collaborate to Support SDG16 at the grassroots level in selected partner countries, (3) plan for PaRD engagement around the SDG16 review at the 2019 HLPF, and (4) engage on efforts to prevent violence against children. The idea of a subgroup on Water and Conflict was also discussed and is under consideration.

Key Advocacy Event: High-Level Political Forum (7 -12 July 2019 in New York)

b. SDG 5 “Gender Equality and Empowerment” – Co-leads: GAC, IRW, Side by Side

Sexual and Gender Based Violence will be the main focus of the work-stream. Where possible, the Work Stream will align with relevant SDG 5 (Gender Equality) indicators and targets, notably: 5.1/5.2/5.3. Interconnected issues include early and forced marriage, human trafficking and education opportunities.

Key Advocacy Events: Ministerial Meeting on FoRB (24/25 July 2018), Inter-faith African Union Meeting (Nov 2018), UN Commission on the Status of Women (March 2019).

c. SDG 3 “Health” – Co-leads: USAID, WorldVision, IRW, WCC

The “Health” work-stream decided to focus on Universal Health Coverage (SDG 3.8) with two clusters. One working on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (SDGs 3.1/3.2) and the other on Sexual and Reproductive Health including HIV/AIDS (SDGs 3.3/3.7).

Key Advocacy Events: World Health Summit (14-16 Oct 2018), Ahimsa Forum (24-27 June 2019), Commission on Population and Development (July 2019).

7. Tuesday morning was dedicated to visualizing existing treasures within PaRD, identifying and agreeing on common goals and charting of the respective next steps.

a. Religious actors mapping Nigeria: Katherine Marshall (WFDD) briefed all participants on the recently completed religious actors mapping in Nigeria. The multi-faced approach combines the different literature, assesses relevant research, conducts interviews and organises consultation events. The full report is freely available on the PaRD website.

b. Religious literacy/ Strategic learning exchange: Azza Karam (UNFPA/ UN-IATF) presented the concept of the Strategic Learning Exchange (SLE) to all participants. The SLE brings together governmental and intergovernmental entities as well as faith-based organisations for mutual learning through exchange and case studies. About 60 participants from 13 countries met in Jordan’s capital Amman from March 21st to 23rd 2018 for the „United Nations Regional Strategic Learning Exchange on Religion, Development and Humanitarian Work“.

- c. Consultants' and Facilitators' Network on Values, Religion and Development:** The network "NEXUS" has been mandated by BMZ and was introduced by Hanno Spitzer/ BMZ. Initiated by the GIZ Sector Programme 'Values, Religion and Development', it aims to function as a platform for exchanging knowledge and experiences, pooling qualified and experienced experts, while representing religious diversity and ensuring inclusivity. All members are invited to make use of this platform of experts.
 - d. Promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health – The Role of Educational Services offered by Religious Actors:** Daniel Legutke (Justitia et Pax) presented a joint project of the German Commission for Justice and Peace and the Health Commission of the Tanzanian Bishops' Conference (TEC), which aims for denominational actors to use their role as multipliers and authorities for a responsible education in the field of sexual and reproductive health.
 - e. Religion and Development Roundtables:** Corrie van der Ven (ACTAlliance) shared her experience with organizing a series of three roundtables on religion and development in the Netherlands. These national-level and multi-stakeholder roundtables foster exchange between the Dutch government and national CSOs/FBOs, aiming at increased mutual understanding and faith literacy.
 - f. Members and partners survey:** To inform the discussions, Emma Bridger (USPG) and Atallah Fitzgibbon (IRW) presented the outcomes of a survey conducted by the former PaRD partners. The survey was conducted to help understanding expectations of members (and formerly partners) from PaRD, how PaRD can increase effectiveness to meet these expectations, which sectors/SDGs should be prioritised, what resources partners are willing to contribute and aid understanding in general what faith communities need to help them engage with the SDGs. A detailed analysis of the outcomes of the survey has been shared with all members.
8. An informal fire-side talk with Rev. Sarah Snyder (Archbishop of Canterbury's Adviser for Reconciliation), Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp (Jacob Soetendorp Institute for Human Values), Pujya Swamiji (Global Interfaith WASH Alliance), Mohamed Elsanousi (The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers) and Elaine Storkey (former President of Tearfund) moderated by Mohammed Abu-Nimer (KAICIID) was one of the spiritual and social highlights for many participants. Current challenges and dynamics in the field of religion and development were discussed, personal experiences and testimonies were shared and links to the mission of PaRD were explored.
 9. Several additional issues were raised throughout the meeting that need to be discussed in more detail: (1) possibilities for joint social media advocacy, (2) formalizing knowledge sharing and dynamics of collaborations, (3) means of joint messaging, including PaRD members as "PaRD ambassadors", (4) religious engagement in the G20 process, (5) closer cooperation with religious leaders, (6) increasing the evidence base, and (7) shrinking of civil spaces.
 10. Participants agreed that PaRD should work towards a bigger high-level joint advocacy event in 2020, preferably in the Global South, which highlights the work and connections of all PaRD members.
 11. PaRD members welcomed the invitation issued by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to hold the PaRD General Assembly 2019 in Copenhagen, Denmark.