




# Partnership for Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency

Report of Teleconference  
September 24, 2001

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## Participants:

J. Werner Schultink (Chair), Nita Dalmiya (UNICEF)  
M.G.Venkatesh Mannar (Vice Chair), David P. Haxton (MI)  
Walter W. Becky (Salt Institute)  
Lin Jiahua (China Salt Industry Association)  
Bruno de Benoist (WHO)  
Jack C.S. Ling, Gerard Burrow (ICCIDD)  
L. Nettles Brown, William A. Brown (Kiwanis)  
Glen F. Maberly, Robert J. Baldwin (PAMM/CDC)  
Frits van der Haar (Secretariat)

Apology: Jan W.F. van Ingen (ESPA)

The Partnership Board meeting planned in New York in association with the Special Session on Children was cancelled due to the tragic events on 11 September 2001. In substitute, a teleconference call was held on 24 September 2001 to discuss matters of immediate importance to the Partnership.

## 1. Previous Business

The report of the previous Board meeting at Morton Salt, Chicago, 16-17 July 2001 was accepted.

The Chair announced that UNICEF followed up on its commitment made at the Chicago meeting to establish a Partnership Secretariat for 18 months and a MOU has been signed between UNICEF and Emory University to that effect. The intent is that this arrangement will be evaluated after one year of operation.

The By Law Subcommittee (Brown, Mannar and Becky) had shared a next version of the text. On discussion, the general consensus was that the Board wished to have an informal statement of its agreed arrangements and procedures, named "Memorandum of Understanding" in lieu of a detailed legal document. The present text should be shortened to the essentials only. The same Subcommittee will prepare the shortened version.

Arrangements are proceeding for a next Board meeting scheduled 29-30 November 2001 in Amsterdam with ESPA hosting.

## 2. Communication on the Partnership

A range of communications materials were being developed in preparation for the Special Session, and the Special Event "A Smart Start for Children". These materials could be useful for a communication through the member organizations' networks about the existence, role and opportunity that the Partnership offers for joint work in pursuit of the elimination goal. Examples of these materials include video, pamphlet, a press kit, CD-Rom, etc.

After discussion, Board members agreed to explore ways in which they could communicate with their partners, affiliates, members, etc. to explain the Partnership and its objectives, and promote some action that each recipient could take to promote iodine nutrition through USI.

Examples of channels quoted were:

- UNICEF's quarterly nutrition mailing, upcoming meetings in Manila, Turkey and Almaty, a message to the Gates Foundation, etc;
- WHO and ICCIDD would use the pamphlet to introduce the Partnership to their networks of regional officers;
- SI asked for materials for use in its next membership meeting in October, etc.

The Secretariat was asked to review the draft text of a pamphlet prepared for the Special Event that announced the formation of the Partnership. It will consult with all Board members and finalize a draft text to be edited and printed through an existing arrangement by UNICEF. Translation in other languages will be considered.

## 3. Thoughts/ideas to preserve the momentum

The Chair introduced the subject by stating that although postponement of the Special Session might dent the global momentum, the real test of progress will stem from the actions that the Partnership can achieve in national efforts. The need for assessment surveys and independent reviews has been actively promoted and indications have been received through UNICEF, ICCIDD, WHO channels, and others, from some nations desiring external verifications. As discussed at previous Board meetings, ICCIDD should have a lead role, and from among the membership of Partners and other sources seek for expertise to form the teams needed. Jack Ling informed that the Executive Director of ICCIDD has started assembling names of experts.

The Board in Chicago reviewed the process of verification on basis of guidelines published by WHO, UNICEF, ICCIDD and other sources. The discussion revealed that each member had to consider its internal arrangements for official agreement on any national evaluation report. A Subcommittee (Maberly, Becky, Schultink and De Benoist) had been asked to further refine the proposed draft guideline. The question was raised how the Board considered any further role for the Subcommittee. It was proposed that the guideline and process described by the Subcommittee was sufficient for proceeding at this point in time. While in any forthcoming national evaluation undertaken under Partnership auspices the existing guidelines were to be used, the Board would still need to learn how each Partner would arrange an organizational approval to the report arising from the evaluation. Meanwhile, the Chair thanked the Subcommittee for the work completed.

There was agreement that the Partnership should pay particular attention to making a contribution to creating or strengthening National Watches. National level and multi-sectoral representation in the Watch was stressed as a necessity. Naturally, any external evaluation would have these activities as a priority in its work plan. Lin Jiahua agreed to write a note of the policy experience in China, to contribute to the Board's understanding on guidelines for verification of progress and strengthening the national capacity for oversight.

4. Item for special attention at the next Board Meeting

The idea was accepted to use some extra time to inform Board members on progress in Europe. The Secretariat was asked to work with Jan van Ingen to prepare an agenda. Bruno de Benoist supported this idea and agreed to help with planning.

5. Any other business

The Secretariat was asked to work on another version of the Global Score Card including the newest data that have been consolidated at UNICEF. Copies were asked for distribution through the regional networks of ICCIDD and WHO.