14TH ICVA GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
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1. Welcome by the Chair

The Chair of the Executive Committee, Thomas Getman (World Vision International), welcomed the participants, thanking them for their attendance and the Secretariat for the preparation of the General Assembly. The Agenda was adopted, with the agreement of possibly changing the order of the presentation of the draft Strategic Plan 2009-2011 (Item 4, originally) and the Chair’s Report (Item 3, originally) due to a meeting being called by the UN’s Emergency Relief Coordinator.

2. Simulation Exercise about Future Challenges for Humanitarian Organisations

A simulation exercise was run for participants by the Humanitarian Futures Programme (HFP) of King’s College, London, as part of the project on The Future of Humanitarian Collaboration: An ICVA Perspective that ICVA has been undertaking with HFP. The objective of the simulation was to trigger a discussion about ICVA’s future strategy and to help set the tone for the discussion on ICVA’s draft Strategic Plan 2009-2011. The simulation took the form of a game, where collaboration was represented by players exchanging information about problems and solutions, to which transaction costs were attached. The aim was to examine how organisations and stakeholders might deal with new and emerging challenges in an unknown future. The overarching question behind the simulation was: how can humanitarian organisations and networks like ICVA be more effective in delivering assistance in these new environments?

Several observations from the exercise helped to elucidate future options and work for ICVA. For example, two very different strategies by the two ‘best’ performing teams were identified and analysed in a report on the simulation exercise. The first team formed as many weak – but collaborative – links as possible, creating a ‘hub’ type organisation within the simulated network that emerged over the course of the game. An organisation with so many connections like this model would experience resource constraints that necessitate engaging in only shallow, loosely tied relationships. The second ‘winning’ strategy was to form strong ties with a small number of select partners, each of which had access to a large amount of information. The emergence of these two strategies prompted the question for ICVA about which type of strategy it might, or should, follow in the future: being either a ‘hub organisation’ or the broker of a few strong relationships.

Some of the other observations from the simulation identified behaviour by teams and individuals, which further supported the rationale and recommendations included in the Draft Action Plan (one of the main documents generated by the ICVA-HFP project and designed to aid ICVA in making decisions about where its potential value to members should lie in the future). The Draft Action Plan and the project in general, which was developed to find future value for the ICVA network, were further discussed by participants in a breakout group on the second day (see Item 12 below).

3. Presentation and Discussion of ICVA’s Draft Strategic Plan 2009-2011

In opening this agenda item, the EXCOM Chair noted two items for the minutes: firstly, the Coordinator’s sabbatical at IMD, which had provided ICVA with improved leadership; and secondly, the publication of ICVA’s History, ICVA at Forty-Something: The Life and Times of a Middle-Aged NGO Consortium, and a formal thanks to Cyril Ritchie (InterAid International) for his input and to the author, Jacqueline Tong.
Introduction to the Strategic Plan

The Coordinator, Ed Schenkenberg, suggested looking at the draft Strategic Plan in the context of what has gone well or not so well over the last three years. He reiterated the need for an honest dialogue in view of the importance for humanitarian organisations to really learn from each other and to build on each other’s capacities in order to better respond to humanitarian needs. The Coordinator asserted that both ICVA and its NGO members have the potential to do much better in terms of influencing decision-makers at the international level and bridging the gap between rhetoric at that top level and realities on the ground.

The Coordinator outlined two central messages to the 2009-2011 draft Strategic Plan: using ICVA’s position in Geneva to influence decision-makers and the development of policy; and attempting to move beyond Geneva to help bridge the gap between policy and practice. Collaboration between the ICVA Secretariat and members has generally been good, but there is potential for far more effective collaboration between members, not just during the GA, but on a continuous basis at the international, regional, and national levels. The Coordinator also clarified that the HFP Draft Action Plan was for discussion only, whereas the draft Strategic Plan was for adoption. Several elements of the HFP Draft Action Plan were, however, incorporated into the draft Strategic Plan.

The Context

Before discussing the contents of the Strategic Plan, the Coordinator explained that in developing a new Strategic Plan, it was important to look at the developments in humanitarian action and the changing environment around us. Issues like climate change and the shrinking of humanitarian space are increasingly of concern. At the same, the humanitarian aid industry continues to be seen as “white and western”.

ICVA also needs to understand its supporters and competitors, given the increased number of networks. In particular, for those NGOs that are members of the different networks, ICVA’s added value must be clear and ICVA must coordinate with other networks where possible. ICVA’s humanitarian focus was restated, which also includes links with disaster risk reduction, rights-based approaches, preparedness, and early recovery. ICVA members cover even more issues, like sustainable development, but ICVA needs to be clear about what it can and cannot cover in order to maintain a focus.

Outlining the Objectives

Outlining briefly the thinking behind the chapters of the Strategic Plan, the Coordinator then introduced each of the five Strategic Objectives in turn:

Strategic Objective 1: ICVA will be more strategic and proactive in humanitarian policy and advocacy.

Strategic Objective 2: ICVA will support network to network collaboration.

Strategic Objective 3: ICVA will become more relevant at regional and country levels.

Strategic Objective 4: ICVA will contribute to building humanitarian leadership.

Strategic Objective 5: ICVA will prepare for future humanitarian challenges.

The linking of objectives two and three were well illustrated by the Myanmar case where ICVA had supported in-country NGO coordination. The Coordinator referred to Kerren Hedlund, who became the NGO Liaison Officer for Myanmar. Supporting NGO coordination and liaising with the quality (Sphere) and accountability (Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International – HAP) structures is something that ICVA should do more in the future.
**Future Activities**

The Coordinator outlined other planned and proposed activities and programmes for the coming three years for the ICVA Secretariat and membership, including the development of network-to-network collaboration; the strengthening of humanitarian principles in policy and response in the context of humanitarian space; an increased focus on collaboration activities between members, in order to prepare for future humanitarian challenges, including through regional workshops; and an increased focus on promoting leadership and change in the sector.

The participants were referred to the Agenda for the next day, in which four breakout groups were to discuss different areas of the draft Strategic Plan to provide more clarity. Members must also realise their responsibility for implementing the Strategic Plan. This element in the last Strategic Plan (2006-2008) perhaps was not made sufficiently clear to members at the time of its adoption.

**DISCUSSION**

One member asked whether ICVA could support specific campaigns or take positions on specific issues or countries/areas, such as Gaza. Another member asked whether ICVA should continue using the term “southern” to refer to members who are based in developing countries, as the term may no longer be relevant.

Several members expressed support for the draft Strategic Plan and the way it had been developed. It was noted that ICVA is an important entry point to the UN system and that this relationship has a valuable impact for other NGOs trying to work with and/or influence other parts of the UN system. A further comment suggested that probably only the executive directors or senior staff of NGOs know about ICVA. It was suggested that members could indicate their ICVA affiliation so that it becomes easier to meet and collaborate.

The Coordinator responded to the idea of ICVA taking positions on specific countries or issues through statements or letters. He explained that the Secretariat has been reluctant to do so, firstly as a number of members are already involved in such advocacy, and secondly, because such advocacy always involves a sign-on procedure, which results in an endless process of drafting, given ICVA’s diverse membership. Additionally, if a position is taken on one issue, such as Gaza, then the question of why not another situation, such as Sri Lanka, arises, making the question of boundaries and decision-making more complex and demanding. Moreover, there is a risk of ICVA then becoming engaged in political advocacy, which would mean losing its humanitarian focus.

It was acknowledged that the use of the term “southern” may no longer be appropriate in a changing world. On the issue of increased regional and national coordination through the ICVA network, the Secretariat would encourage a move beyond Geneva, but at the same time would be dependent on members to put things physically and practically in place (the Myanmar NGO Liaison Officer was given as an example). The idea behind the proposed draft Strategic Plan is not to open regional ICVA offices, but to link to existing resources that the Secretariat can support more effectively.

In order to have more members’ staff know about ICVA, the Coordinator suggested that part of members agencies’ internal training or induction processes could include information on ICVA, so that field-based staff would gain more knowledge on ICVA, its functions, and benefits.

**4. REPORT OF THE ICVA CHAIR**

The Chair of the Executive Committee presented his report, contained in Annex 2.
5. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EXCOM) NOMINEES’ PRESENTATIONS

Led by Mamadou Ndiaye (OFADEC), the nominations committee reported the results of the nominations process and representatives of the following organisations each presented their nominations to the GA:

- ActionAid International
- Action by Churches Together International (ACT International)
- Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA)
- Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA)
- Community and Family Services International (CFSI)
- Concern Worldwide
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- Handicap International
- HelpAge International
- International Islamic Relief Organisation – Saudi Arabia (IIROSA)
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- MERCY Malaysia
- Merlin
- Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
- Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK)
- Refugee Council USA (RCUSA)
- Women’s Refugee Commission (formerly: Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children)
- World Vision International (WVI)

6. RESULTS OF ELECTIONS FOR ICVA EXCOM

Following the counting of the votes for the EXCOM by the nominations committee, assisted by two observers from the Secretariat, the results were announced by Mr. Ndiaye on behalf of the nominations committee. The General Assembly elected the following nine organisations to the Executive Committee:

- AHA
- CFSI
- Concern Worldwide
- DRC
- MERCY Malaysia
- RCK
- NRC
- Women’s Refugee Commission.

IIROSA also received enough votes to be part of the Executive Committee. However, as detailed in Items 10 and 11 below, the EXCOM determined that irregularities in the presentation of IIROSA’s nomination, and related unresolved questions, made it necessary to suspend IIROSA’s membership in ICVA and so the ninth seat on the EXCOM was filled by ACT.

The election of Chair was noted for the next day’s agenda, with two candidates: Paul O’Brien (Concern Worldwide) and Jemilah Mahmood (MERCY Malaysia).
7. **GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON ISSUES CENTRAL TO ICVA’S DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2011**

Group discussions were held on the following issues:

1. Draft Action Plan from ICVA-HFP project;
2. Collaboration among ICVA members at the field level;
3. Membership commitments; and
4. Change and leadership in the humanitarian community.

These groups were provided with guidance and questions to discuss and asked for specific outcomes on issues related to the draft Strategic Plan (see Annex 3). The groups reported back to the plenary under Item 12, below.

**8. REPORT OF THE ICVA TREASURER**

The Treasurer, Jan (Jappe) E. Erichsen (NRC), presented the financial reports for the years 2006-2008, expressing appreciation for the exceptional accounting work, noting that it was the first time that the audit report of the third year could be presented to the GA. He commended the good fundraising work of the Secretariat. The Treasurer’s presentation is available at: <www.icva.ch/doc00003481.html> and the Audit Reports at: <www.icva.ch/doc00000065.html>.

The Treasurer noted that ICVA’s financial situation was generally sound and that the loan from Individuell Människohjälp (IM) had been fully repaid in 2008. He specified that, over the last three years, ICVA has been very careful in its spending. The late payment of a Danish contribution led to the delay of some planned activities and resulted in a larger carry-over than anticipated. It was very positive that ICVA had closed the accounts for 2008 with no debt or deficit. At the same time, the substantive reserve and the surplus should not be seen as too positive, since donors give ICVA funds to spend, not to store. The accumulated carry-over of previous years will go towards the budget for the General Assembly and annual Conference; an emergency NGO coordination fund; three months emergency operating costs for the ICVA Secretariat; and a staff development fund.

The Audit Reports had already been approved by the EXCOM. The Treasurer drew the attention of the participants to the fact that the personnel costs are a major part of ICVA’s expenses, given that personnel do the work of ICVA; these costs are not administrative, but operational costs.

He presented the fact that there was only one Latin American organisation left in the ICVA membership as a challenge to the network and suggested that recruitment efforts should be undertaken to fill this geographical gap in the membership. One member noted that even if there are limited numbers of members based in Latin America, it should be remembered that members have operations and, in more than a few cases, members of their own in Latin America. There was agreement with the point that the personnel is what defines ICVA’s work, but that efforts should be made to make ICVA’s objectives as measurable as possible. In response to a question on efforts to track ICVA’s carbon footprint, it was noted that some within the Secretariat felt strongly about the issue and they would think, together with the EXCOM, about ways of quantifying it in the financial budgeting and reporting. Another question concerned the minimal level of financial sustainability for ICVA in difficult times and whether a three month operational reserve was sufficient, given it was not so in the UK, for example.
The Chair thanked the Secretariat for very responsibly handling ICVA’s financial resources, which have a good balance between membership dues and government/institutional contributions.

Decision

- The Audit Reports of 2006-2008 were received by the General Assembly.

9. Presentation of Candidates for the ICVA Chair

Jemilah Mahmood (MERCY Malaysia) and Paul O’Brien (Concern Worldwide) presented their candidatures for the Chair of the EXCOM. Votes for the Chair were cast after Item 10. (Please also see Item 13 for further explanation of the Chair election, under Article XIII. Functions of the General Assembly, new paragraph f.)

10. Suspension of IIROSA’s ICVA Membership

The Chair introduced this item as an opportunity to express trust in one another and asked the General Assembly for their analysis and approval of a decision that the Executive Committee had taken. He explained that the EXCOM, in taking its decision, had undertaken a careful analysis of the Statutes. The Chair read through a statement of facts outlining the matter related to allegations of affiliation with terrorist activities of the International Islamic Relief Organisation – Saudi Arabia (IIROSA).

IIROSA had submitted a nomination for election to the EXCOM by the 14th General Assembly. The nominations committee then asked for clarification on two issues in January 2009: 1) why there was a listing on IIROSA’s website of IIROSA already being a member of the ICVA EXCOM and asking that the reference be removed; and 2) asking for an explanation of why the alleged links of IIROSA with terrorist activities still existed. IIROSA replied to the nominations committee, including that it removed the website reference to being on ICVA’s EXCOM, but the nominations committee felt that central questions were still outstanding and, therefore, referred the matter to the EXCOM. The EXCOM met on 1 February 2009 and decided that IIROSA would be allowed to run in the EXCOM election, but agreed that IIROSA would be asked to provide an explanation of the allegations related to terrorist activities to the GA when presenting its nomination. Should such an explanation not be provided, the EXCOM would raise the matter with the GA at the time of the nominations. On 2 February 2009, members of the EXCOM and nominations committee met with IIROSA’s representative, Fawzia Al Ashmawi; she agreed to provide such an explanation to the GA about the fact that IIROSA is listed on the UN’s and United States government’s lists of organisations and individuals alleged to fund terrorist activities, as well as to provide an overview of the steps and processes undertaken by IIROSA to address these allegations.

However, during the nomination presentation of IIROSA to the GA on 3 February 2009, Dr. Al Ashmawi neither mentioned nor provided an explanation of this matter. Unfortunately, the EXCOM also failed to raise the matter at the time. On 4 February 2009, the EXCOM (which presides until the close of the General Assembly, according to the Statutes) decided unanimously to suspend the membership of IIROSA (in accordance with Article X.b) of the ICVA Statutes, which were in force at the time and decided to also bring that decision to the General Assembly for its approval. The EXCOM’s decision was presented to the General Assembly, as ICVA’s supreme body, for affirmation. The question put to the General Assembly was as follows:
Do you agree with the suspension of IIROSA from the ICVA membership until a satisfactory resolution of the matter related to allegations of affiliation with terrorist activities has been reached?

Members were asked to write “yes” or “no” on cards that were distributed and then to put the cards in the ballot box.

The nominations committee agreed with the statement of facts that had been read out and noted that they were ready to respond to any questions that people might have. As a point of clarification, Jock Baker (Care International) asked why the EXCOM had failed to raise the matter during the nominations and asked if there had been an agreement to do so. The Chair replied “mea culpa”; the EXCOM had decided ahead of time to raise the matter, but had failed to prepare the proper language to make the clarifications following Dr. Al Ashmawi’s nomination presentation and so the EXCOM had to meet before being able to respond.

The Chair noted that the members of the EXCOM had attempted to meet with Dr. Al Ashmawi that morning (on 4 February 2009), but that they had been unable to get in touch with her and so she was invited to take the floor and do what the EXCOM had asked her to do yesterday, if she liked. Dr. Al Ashmawi took the floor saying she had many questions. She noted that IIROSA has been a member of ICVA since 1994. Following the tragic events of 11 September 2001, the (American) Bush administration pressured the UN to create a “list of organisations which are accused to be terrorists without any proof.” She gave the example of the Guantanamo prison: more than 80% of the prisoners there are innocent and are accused illegally, she said. Dr. Al Ashmawi said that IIROSA’s name has been on the list since 2002, so why did ICVA not take this decision before and why did ICVA accept IIROSA’s membership fees over seven years if IIROSA’s money is “dirty money”? Dr. Al Ashmawi asked, “Why did the people that had met with me not tell me that there was a condition sine qua non that the allegations had to be presented to the General Assembly?” If IIROSA was considered a terrorist organisation, the Swiss would close the IIROSA office and remove her representation, she added. Dr. Al Ashmawi then spoke of her personal reputation and her relations with the Swiss mission. She said that if there was a vote taken today, it would be illegal because there was no quorum. She also noted that the error on the website saying IIROSA was on the EXCOM was a mistake made by the engineer who confused ICVA with CONGO, as IIROSA is a member of the CONGO Board, where they had been elected three times. Since 1994, there have been no problems with the Swiss, with CONGO, or with ICVA. But, she asked, after IIROSA was elected to the EXCOM, “Why would a decision be taken to suspend their membership without proof?” IIROSA works in a transparent manner and she invited members to look at IIROSA’s Annual Report, which shows how IIROSA spends its money.

The Chair then invited members of the nominations committee or the EXCOM to have the privilege of response. Jemilah Mahmood (Vice-Chair of the presiding EXCOM) said she was present in the meeting with Dr. Al Ashmawi on 2 February 2009, along with Mamadou Ndiaye (OFADEC) and Brita Sydhoff (IRCT) from the nominations committee and that it was made explicitly clear that Dr. Al Ashmawi was to declare the allegations and steps that IIROSA had taken as a matter of transparency during her nomination presentation. The EXCOM had allowed IIROSA to stand on the condition of transparency so that ICVA members would be informed. It was an excellent opportunity for IIROSA to tell the members about the allegations and that they would need time to address them, as with all such allegations. To say that the condition was not set was inaccurate, said Dr. Mahmood. Dr. Al Ashmawi said that the group had not told her that it was a condition sine qua non and then asked why the statement of facts had not been prepared before the election, but only after IIROSA was elected. The Chair said that the EXCOM had all trusted that Dr. Al Ashmawi would raise the issue during the nomination presentation and so had not prepared the language until now and, even now, the opportunity to clear the organisational name was being provided and that a
spot would be held on the EXCOM until the clearing was made possible. The Chair noted that the EXCOM was undertaking “careful management of our election process under our Articles.” The EXCOM did seek to have time with Dr. Al Ashmawi before the EXCOM met that morning. Dr. Al Ashmawi added that the list had been blocked since 2004.

Kamel Mohanna (AMEL) said that ICVA provides the opportunity to bring together international humanitarian organisations that have Islamic or Christian or Jewish in their names, as ICVA is a good place to exchange our cultures and our ideas and to develop, together, universal values. The current climate with US President Obama coming in should also be taken into consideration. We should be very careful about not confusing Islamaphobia and Islam. He agreed that there should be some clarification from IIROSA’s side, but knowing IIROSA, it was good to have them in ICVA.

From the nominations committee, Mr. Ndiaye clarified that they had looked at all the nominations and they were very clear in not saying that the allegations against IIROSA are true or not, as they realise it takes time to clear such allegations. The point was not to accuse or say the allegations are right or wrong, but to have sufficient elements for the EXCOM and ICVA members to make a decision. The nominations committee felt that the information received to date was not sufficient to make a decision. He then quoted a paragraph from a letter received from IIROSA’s lawyer dated 30 January 2009, which highlighted the short time frame and the inability to provide adequate information, “Given the short three-day timeframe between the Nominations Committee’s email and the Executive Committee’s meeting this Sunday, February 1st, as we noted above we were unable to draft a more comprehensive response to your concerns and were not able to attach the supporting documentation that has been submitted to other entities in support of IIROSA. Thus, we are willing to provide any documentation that would assist you in making your decision regarding the nomination of IIROSA.”

Steven Muncy (CFSI) said that if the EXCOM had known the decision was not being honoured, the EXCOM should have raised the matter at the time to avoid arriving at such an awkward situation. The Chair said that the EXCOM had felt that there was an ironclad agreement for IIROSA to address the issue and so the EXCOM did not prepare the proper language to address the matter. If it could be done again, it would be have been done by saying “point of order” and asking for other clarifications to be made by the IIROSA representative at the time of the nomination presentation. This decision is not an eviction, but a suspension until such time as the record is cleared, the Chair clarified.

Mr. Ndiaye noted that when he was presiding over the nominations presentations, he had asked if there were other questions, as a way to get this matter raised, even though it was not. Sally Thomson (TBBC) asked for an explanation about whether there was a step before suspension, such as not having voting rights or not being able to take up office, since it seems that the EXCOM had gone two steps to suspension. She noted that, “In organisations, you usually take people away from their duties before suspending them. Did the EXCOM look at that option?” The ICVA Coordinator noted that in looking at the Statutes, it became clear to EXCOM that there is a gap because the choices are either suspension or termination; the new EXCOM will have to look into that gap.

The General Assembly was asked to vote on “yes” for the suspension of IIROSA or “no” for no suspension. The Chair clarified that there was a quorum (one-third) of members present. The nominations committee, assisted by two observers from the Secretariat, counted the votes in plain view and announced that there were 23 “yes” votes cast and 8 “no” votes cast.
Decision:

- Until further notice, IIROSA was suspended, awaiting further information satisfactory to the EXCOM, but a seat will be held on the EXCOM until IIROSA’s suspension is lifted.

11. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW CHAIR AND RUN-OFF FOR THE NINTH EXCOM SEAT VACATED BY IIROSA’S SUSPENSION

The nominations committee announced that Paul O’Brien (Concern Worldwide) was elected as Chair of the incoming ICVA EXCOM.

A run-off election for the ninth seat on the EXCOM, which had been vacated by the suspension of IIROSA, was held between ACT and CRDA (both had received the same number of votes in the first round). ACT was elected as the ninth member of the EXCOM.

12. REPORT BACK FROM GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATE ON THE DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF ICVA

Each of the four breakout groups reported back on the discussions and conclusions they came to within each of their respective groups (see Annex 3 for the groups’ guidance notes and questions).

**Group One: Draft Action Plan ICVA – HFP Project**

The group discussed issues directly related to Strategic Objective Five (preparations for future humanitarian challenges) and the Draft Action Plan elaborated by the HFP project. Collaboration is critical, but alone is not a driver behind humanitarian activities, which instead should be the needs of local communities and beneficiaries. Collaboration should be integral to everything and extend beyond ICVA’s membership. It would be important, therefore, to look at what value ICVA can add to existing structures and think about collaborating with other networks.

One main conclusion from the group was to map the collaborative structures that already exist – including national, regional, and international entities – and then to ask what is missing: would we need new structures or should ICVA support or strengthen what already exists? There are already many existing networks, some of which have become inactive or ceased functioning. There could be opportunities to reinvigorate some of those. With networks that have collapsed, lessons should be learned about why they collapsed or stopped functioning, thereby avoiding reinventing structures. One example to look at would be the “Partnership in Action” (PARinAC) experience with UNHCR in the nineties, which set up regional structures.

The group felt that the HFP Draft Action Plan was too ambitious with its global focus in only a two-year timeframe and, therefore, felt hesitant about pursuing it. The group restated how mapping existing networks and looking at what is already being done, should be the first step. For example, what plans are already being prepared for pandemic responses (like avian flu)? The group thought that the focus of the mapping should be more on preparedness, especially locally and regionally, looking at what is being done, what is working, and why. The group also questioned whether the HFP plan was realistic about the resources that exist in terms of the demands it would make on ICVA staff and funding.

The conclusion was that the project should scale back to work within its timeframe, look at what structures already exist, and consider doing a pilot workshop (simulation exercise) in just one
region and not globally. Relating the HFP plan to the fifth Strategic Objective, the group felt that the “concrete” actions outlined were too general and rather broad to be helpful to ICVA’s future planning. They again suggested scaling down, becoming more specific, and workable for the timeframe.

**Group Two: Collaboration Among ICVA Members at the Field level**

The key message stemming from the discussion was to think from the local level up and determine needs from that local perspective before creating or “imposing” new coordination mechanisms or collaborative structures in a country. The group felt that greater collaboration at the field level offered a potential way to address the gap between policy and practice. In terms of whether ICVA could work jointly as a policy-to-field link with networks like HAP, Sphere, or ALNAP on field deployments, the group suggested one starting point would be to first determine the issues around which stakeholders (including national and international NGOs) may be drawn together in a country. If the need for a coordination or liaison function has been identified (as it may not always be needed), that person would then be in an ideal position to create the space for dialogue on common issues of concern, in a flexible, *ad hoc* manner, and identify those issues of common interest. When these relate to issues that other networks (e.g. Sphere, ALNAP, etc.) are working on, field-generated information could be fed into the policy debates of those networks, but must be based on practical problems and experiences. The networks in turn, could provide the field with technical expertise.

The group suggested an evaluation of other coordination mechanisms would be very valuable to any future ICVA coordination role. Existing coordination functions and offices, such as in Juba, South Sudan or in DRC, for example, would be worth examining for good practice, strategy, terms of reference, and guidance.

There could be a two-pronged approach to coordination. In the case of a large scale disaster, like Myanmar, needs become apparent quickly. A standby ‘liaison’ pool could be an idea and would probably necessitate the need for a local counterpart to develop quick emergency response capacity where there is no existing structure. Outside of an emergency, ICVA might want to consider whether there would be some value in playing an additional role by investing time in regional or country specific policy issues. It would be important to identify a country where ICVA could add value and to also identify capable candidates for such in-country roles.

The group felt that ICVA’s primary value lies in its ability to build and strengthen relationships between local and international NGOs. Nurturing such relationships are where the big agencies generally fail, as they are often too busy diving into new emergency situations. The group stated that ICVA could be the starting point for building collaborative endeavours, if no other structures exist, but it would require broad inclusiveness, looking carefully for guidance.

**Group Three: Membership Commitments**

The key discussion revolved around the criteria of accountability and quality standards for members and how – or if – monitoring or reporting should be done. The group elaborated that there must be nuance and flexibility in reporting on the quality of responses. Criteria to allow for the varying levels of capacity within the ICVA membership should be taken into consideration. However, the group agreed that all members – old and new – should make every effort to apply the quality and accountability standards defined in the membership criteria. The idea of every member being forced to sign the same accountability frameworks was dismissed by the group, because there is no “one size fits all” approach, which would be potentially exclusive. The group also did not expect or think that the ICVA Secretariat or EXCOM should take on a quality monitoring function.
The idea of critiquing the accountability frameworks that do exist, instead of just adopting them, and examining the relevance for members was discussed as something for EXCOM to consider. The suggestion for tasks of an EXCOM “membership committee” would be to provide support for members in reaching certain standards rather than monitoring them. Such a committee would only follow-up with members if substantive allegations were raised regarding the violation of certain standards.

The idea of possibly merging ICVA with HAP was not recommended. The group was in agreement that ICVA was larger than HAP in terms of its mandate and objectives. In addition, there are other feedback initiatives and factors that are relevant to attaining operational-level improvements. Although a merger was dismissed, the group felt that a close working relationship between ICVA and HAP was desirable.

Suggestions about how ICVA could become more representative of its members’ views, included approaching those members absent from the GA to find out the reasons for their absence and to address these reasons, where possible, to encourage more engagement with ICVA. Other suggestions included regularly holding strategy meetings aimed at finding common advocacy issues. ICVA could play a role in creating space for members to collaborate on more specific issues or concerns.

The group agreed that collaboration between ICVA members should not be made a membership criterion: collaboration and its driving forces are hard to measure, although it was understood that collaboration is at ICVA’s core and is attractive to organisations wishing to join. Making collaboration a pre-requisite would carry the risk of making ICVA more exclusive/elitist; instead, ICVA should be as inclusive as possible and encourage collaboration through membership.

Finally, it was recommended by one participant that ICVA look at the members that have left in the last few years and find out why they left (some were known to be more development oriented): whether it was for financial reasons or because they did not gain anything from their membership.

**Group Four: Change and Leadership in the Humanitarian Community**

The group agreed that change and leadership are two interconnected topics that ICVA should work on over the next three years, but clarified that these topics are really tools to achieve the ultimate goal of delivering humanitarian aid better. The group stressed two underlying principles to the direction for ICVA to take: firstly, a more proactive role in the humanitarian reform process (as in the full spectrum of reform issues and not only UN reform), not allowing the UN to be a sole or central focus; and secondly, a more challenging role in change and leadership in the humanitarian reform process, to “rediscover the soul of humanitarianism”, while not getting too bogged-down in technicalities. In delivering on the objective for change and leadership, the group felt that the Secretariat should have commitments from the new EXCOM and membership to provide more inputs and support; otherwise the Secretariat would be left giving statements without a full membership mandate.

The group felt that ICVA could play a facilitating role in grooming and developing humanitarian leadership, but that it was not something that the Secretariat should specifically try and do; instead the Secretariat could be an information hub for leadership development and grooming opportunities.

The group discussed the idea of developing Humanitarian Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), or as they re-named them, “MHGs”. The group concluded that the new EXCOM would have to look further at this question, in terms of developing a more concrete narrative examining whether ICVA should take a part in the development of such goals. If the decision was taken to go
ahead, the group proposed three points: first, to focus on specific and pertinent issues, such as humanitarian space; second, once issues were determined, to implement concrete steps to identify and create goals; and third, to ensure that the goals are acceptable to all – that they are “universal” and apply equally across different cultural spheres – and have the accompanying necessary criteria of, for example, timelines and measurability.

The group then asked whether such “MHGs” should be internal to ICVA or whether they would be shared with the wider community, in which case their development would probably require much wider engagement. The group also discussed how ICVA could deliver on such a busy work plan, and whether ICVA’s EXCOM would step up to the challenges presented or even if EXCOM’s performance should be measured in some way.

Closing Discussion
The Policy Officer, Manisha Thomas, opened up the floor for comments on the draft Strategic Plan, asking whether there was general agreement with the five objectives and direction; whether the discussions were adequately reflected in the Plan; and whether any changes or clarifications were needed based on the discussions.

The Coordinator noted that he had heard more nuanced, precise, and specific directions, during the discussion, but did not sense disagreement with the elements of the draft document. He commented that bringing in more precision could potentially limit how strategic the plan would be, but that some suggestion could be easily elaborated.

The Secretariat would do further work in making some of the activities more precise and making the document a little more hard hitting. It could reflect more the need to find our (humanitarian) “soul” and founding passions or anger again, as had been suggested during an earlier discussion.

Some participants reiterated the need to develop the Strategic Plan’s outputs into something more concrete and specific. A further reflection concluded that ICVA’s strength remains its policy and advocacy capabilities, which could be stressed more.

Pete Sweetnam (Merlin) commented that a strategic plan should elaborate what we do and not how we do it, and motioned that the Secretariat should really examine what is possible within a three year timeframe, make the suggested concrete additions, and that the GA agree to trust the Secretariat to do that for EXCOM’s approval. The suggestion was seconded by Paul O’Brien (Concern Worldwide), who added that the document showed a good general direction. The suggestion was approved unanimously.

Decision:

- The ICVA Strategic Plan 2009-2011 was endorsed by the General Assembly, bearing in mind that the ICVA Secretariat will revise the draft plan based on the discussion and submit it to the new EXCOM for approval.

13. ICVA STATUTES – DISCUSSION AND DECISIONS ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

The General Assembly can change the Statutes on the basis of proposals made in advance of the GA. Some amendments were proposed by the ICVA EXCOM and some by individual members.

Proposed changes in the form of general comments could not be accepted, as precise language changes had to be proposed at least 60 days prior to the opening of the GA. It was noted that, in the future, clarification of this process should be provided to members providing general comments.
The invalid proposed amendments, which could be taken up at the next GA, included the following:

- A suggestion, in (new) Art. XVII. a), to specify the “number of years of one serving term of an Executive Committee member” and “the maximum number of terms that an Executive Committee member can be re-elected”. Several participants said that there was no good reason for such a term limit and that some of the EXCOM members had served ICVA well by being on the EXCOM repeatedly and for several terms in a row;
- A proposal in (new) Art. XVIII. b) to remove the term limit for EXCOM officers. Several members noted that there was no good reason for this limit and that, in fact, officers should be able to serve more than one term;
- In the discussion, it was also suggested to clarify in (new) Art. XVIII. b) that Officers are elected as individuals, not as organisations (as is the case with EXCOM members); and
- It was also noted that in (new) Art. XVII. a), the reference to “the gender of the agency’s intended representative…” needed to be corrected linguistically.

It was suggested that these proposals be submitted as proposed amendments to the 15th GA.

The decisions taken on each of the proposed amendments, with reference to the new article numbers, were as follows:

**Articles II, III, and IV, on Membership in ICVA, Observers Status in ICVA, and Affiliate Membership in ICVA**

The proposed amendments, including the new Articles II and III, reflect the new membership criteria and by-law on ICVA membership as adopted by the ICVA EXCOM in 2007. Article II included a clearer description of the three categories of members eligible for ICVA membership; Articles III and IV describe the status of ICVA Observers and Affiliates, respectively.

It was clarified that if a federation of NGOs becomes a member, its ICVA membership does not prevent the members of the federation to become ICVA members in their own right. ACT and its member organisation ICCO both being members of ICVA was cited as an example.

The amendments **PASSED by acclamation**.

**Article X. New Members**

The proposed amendments were to put the Statutes in line with the current membership by-law, adopted by the EXCOM in 2007. They clarify that applicants for Observer and Affiliate status will follow the same application procedure and will be assessed against ICVA’s membership criteria. An applicant for Observer status has to specify the relevant paragraphs in its founding document, which explain why it is unable to become a member, while an applicant for Affiliate status will have to provide confirmation of its status as an independent research institution affiliated with an academic institution.

The amendment **PASSED by acclamation**.

**Article XII. Suspension, Termination of Membership**

It was clarified that there were two possible reasons in the Statutes for suspension of membership, namely the non-payment of dues under Article XII a), and “good and sufficient reasons” under Article XII b).

The proposed amendment under a) specifies that the ICVA Secretariat has to notify a member six months prior to the termination of its membership due to non-payment of dues. Members should not, however, need to be notified prior to suspension for non-payment of dues, given that suspension is automatic after one year of non-payment of dues. Sending a notice six months prior to
suspension for non-payment of dues would not be workable, as it would not be clear if the dues would be paid by the end of the year or not.

The amendment under a) (deletion of “suspension or”) PASSED by acclamation.

Regarding the proposed amendment under c), namely to oblige members wishing to terminate their ICVA membership to give six months’ advance notice and defining 31 December as the only time for any such termination to take effect, several members noted that members could leave ICVA at any time by simply no longer paying dues and/or disengaging, so that there would be no way to enforce such an amendment. While there is no written clarification anywhere that membership dues are non-refundable, it is understood that they are not refundable. The Secretariat will make that point when sending out the invoices for the dues, in order to avoid any requests for refunds in case a member decides to leave ICVA.

Paragraph c): Proposal REJECTED unanimously.

Article XIII. Functions of the General Assembly
Under paragraph d), “future programmes” was identified as a relic of ICVA’s structure dating from before the mid-1990s and as such should be removed, as ICVA no longer had “programmes”. It was replaced by “the multi-year Strategic Plan”.
Paragraph d): The amendment PASSED by acclamation, and “future programmes” was replaced by “the multi-year Strategic Plan”.

A new paragraph f) was proposed to have the GA elect the Chair of the EXCOM and also proposing not to allow a Chair to be re-elected to succeed herself/himself in the same office, which was in-line with the current Statutes.

A question was raised about the election of the Chair earlier in the day. It was clarified that the reason there was an election for the Chair this time was that on 15 December 2008, the Chair of the ICVA EXCOM had written to the membership, on behalf of the EXCOM, informing them of the proposal to have the GA elect the next ICVA Chair in February 2009, rather than have the new EXCOM appoint the Chair. This election would be an exception proposed by the EXCOM for the 14th GA. In the same message, the Chair noted that the EXCOM proposed [within the required time frame] a change to the Statutes so that the election of the Chair would become officially accepted by the GA (new Art. XIII f ). There were no objections to the exception proposed by the Chair, on behalf of the EXCOM, and so the election of the Chair had taken place at this GA.
Paragraph f): The amendment PASSED by acclamation.

The proposed amendment for paragraph h) specified that “available” audited financial statements would be received by the GA, as the audited statement of the preceding year cannot always be ready by the time of the GA.

Paragraph h): The amendment PASSED by acclamation.

A proposed new paragraph l) envisioned the dissolution of ICVA by the General Assembly, but it was noted that such a provision was already included under Article XXIV on Dissolution.


Article XIV. Meetings. Quorum. Voting
There was a proposal to raise the quorum for GAs from one-third to one-half of members (Art. XIV b) and to insert a paragraph d) envisioning the dissolution of ICVA by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting instead of the simple majority of members currently specified in Art. XXIV. Several members stated that the current majorities and quorums for the General Assembly should be kept, given that there was not one-half of the membership at this GA and it would
probably be hard to get such a quorum. It was also felt that the means of dissolving ICVA as defined in Art. XXIV was satisfactory (the majority in Art. XXIV was subsequently raised to two thirds, see below).

Art. XIV b) and d): Proposals rejected unanimously.

Article XVI. Observers
It was proposed to change the title of this Article to “Observers at the General Assembly” in order to clarify that it does not refer to organisations with Observer status in ICVA. Concerning the participation in the ICVA GA of organisations that are not members, it was proposed to strike the clause “provided that the registration fee for NGO observers has been paid”, given that such a registration fee had never been requested.

The amendments passed by acclamation.

Article XVII. Composition of the Executive Committee
The last paragraph under a) was changed to read: “Executive Committee members shall serve until the first meeting of the newly elected Executive Committee immediately following the subsequent General Assembly.” (Italics represent changes)

The amendment passed by acclamation.

Article XVIII. Functions of the Executive Committee
In paragraph b) it was proposed to adapt the language to the new paragraph XIII d) concerning the election of the EXCOM Chair by the GA. In paragraph k) it was proposed to add the preparation of the multi-year Strategic Plan as a responsibility of the EXCOM; the Plan would then be submitted to the GA for adoption.

Paragraph b) and k): The amendments passed by acclamation.

Article XXIV. Dissolution
It was proposed to raise the majority required for the dissolution of ICVA from a simple majority to a two-third majority.

The amendment passed by acclamation.

14. Closure

The outgoing ICVA Chair thanked the participants and closed ICVA’s 14th General Assembly with good wishes for the new EXCOM.
ANNEX 1: PARTICIPANTS’ LIST

MEMBERS:

Action by Churches Together (ACT)  Robert White  Marian White
ActionAid International (ActionAid)  Bijay Kumar  Anne Street
Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance (AMERA)  Barbara E. Harrell-Bond
Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA)  Misikir Tilahun
All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI)  Deepesh Sinha  Kamel Mohanna
AMEL Association (Lebanese Association  for Popular Action, AMEL)
BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights (BADIL)  Rania Al Madi
CARE International (CARE)  Jock Baker
Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)  Matthew Carter  Meshesha Shewarega
Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA)  Rezaul Chowdhury
Coastal Association for Social Transformation  Nathalie Herlemont-Zoritchak
Community and Family Services International (CFSI)  Paul O’Brien  Ann Mary Olsen  Kathrine Starup
Concern Worldwide (Concern)  Nathalie Herlemont-Zoritchak  Richard Blewitt  Ahmed Abdul Razaq Alawadhi
Danish Refugee Council (DRC)  Abdulkarim Alshehhi
Handicap International (HI)  Cyril Ritchie
HelpAge International (HelpAge)  Evert van Bodegom
Human Appeal International (HAI)  Brita Sydhoff
InterAid International (IAI)  Greg Brown
Interchurch Organisation for Development Co-operation (ICCO)  Michael Gallagher  Colette Bouka Coula
International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)  Faizal Ahmad Perdaus  Jemilah Mahmood (Vice-Chair)
International Islamic Relief Organisation – Saudi Arabia (IIROSA)  Subhanand Seegoolam  Pete Sweetnam
International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)  Paul Nesse  Mamadou Ndiaye
International Rescue Committee (IRC)  Judy Wakahiui
Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)  Gordon Lewis
Lutheran World Federation (LWF)  Rudy von Bernuth
Malaysian Medical Relief Society (MERCY Malaysia)  Sally Thomson
Mauritius Council of Social Service (MACOSS)  Dale Buscher
Merlin
Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)  Jappe Erichsen (Treasurer)
Office Africain pour le Développement et la Coopération (OFADEC)
Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK)
Salvation Army
Save the Children Alliance (SAVE)
Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC)
Women’s Refugee Commission (Women’s Commission)
World Vision International (WVI)
Claudine Haenni
Thomas Getman (Chair)
Philippe Guiton

**Observers:**
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
Baptiste Millet
Jürg Montani
International Federation of Red Cross and
Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
Jette Michelsen
Robert Mister

**Inviters:**
Humanitarian Futures Programme, Kings College
Cliff Dennett
Sean Lowrie
Noah Radford
Ana Urgoiti
NGO Liaison Officer, Myanmar
Kerren Hedlund
Oxfam Australia
Kate Sutton
Save the Children Sweden
Alfhild Petren

**ICVA Secretariat:**
Marianne Gémin
Bethan Montague-Brown
Ed Schenkenberg
Rüdiger Schöch
Manisha Thomas
ANNEX 2: REPORT OF THE CHAIR

In rereading all EXCOM minutes of the last 3 years’, the 2006-2008 Strategic Plan and the just published history of ICVA, within the context of the historic new government in the USA and the global financial collapse, I was struck with how we all long for models (Mandela, Gandhi or now hopefully Obama) or pivotal organizations to lead us out of, or creatively in the midst of, the messes created through our human condition and periodic natural disasters. So often government, religious and humanitarian institutions, disappoint us. We seek probably in vain for contemporary figures that speak sufficient notes of optimism to prepare the way and provide authentic voice to our longings. And as pointed out at Davos last week any visionary solutions must be offered, if authentic at all, for the “bottom billion” not just the “haves”.

I believe ICVA has provided in the past 3 years such a trusted organizational role and must increasingly in the days ahead. A Winter’s Tale, Shakespeare’s adult fairy tale of promise lost and hope found is so appropriate for the history, present reality and challenge to still young, even in middle age, rejuvenated ICVA. The younger generation in the play more easily forgives the errors and sins of the elders and show how love regenerates renewal even against impossible odds as Prince Foristell tells Princess Partita “what you do/Still betters what is done”.

I. What is the present context we see for the Humanitarian Community …with what odds are we in ICVA and in our organizations faced?

When we met in 2006 to approve the 2006-2008 Strategic Plan we all were still reeling from the 2005 Tsunami and the Pakistan earthquake recovery. Humanitarian principles and human rights had been severely eroded. We sought as ICVA, and as individual organizations to deal, not fully, with the consequences particularly of the increased scrutiny and necessity for staff and population security. Accountability, transparency and partnership building have been the stated watchwords as we have seen how the desperate situation of so many of our recipients-clients-beneficiaries in the field have drawn us to deeper reflection and questioning of our often self serving promotion and marketing, as members. ICVA was created and reconstituted for collaboration and improving capacities to respond to human need. New appreciation for one another especially local NGOs, as well as UN and Red Cross partners, and our colleagues in the aid and humanitarian affairs offices of our donor governments, was certainly one result of the reordering of our priorities and relationships. But we as the main operational partners still have been largely dominated by the UN in aid coordination.

In light of the meeting of the Strategic Plan objectives there is positive movement. And in contrast to three years ago, reports are better and life easier in the places struck then by the tsunami and the earthquakes. Also Colombia has a measure of peace and is rebuilding. Southern Sudan although fragile offers reason for confidence that long standing internecine disputes can be ameliorated and societies rebuilt. Iraq even against all odds apparently is on the way to a better reality.

Burma/Myanmar continues to suffer the consequences of the devastating Nargis cyclone and oppressive government and the region, even in Thailand, deliver an awful shocking response with refoulment and worse death sentences by boat for the refugees.

While there is, after millions of deaths, fragile peace once again in devastated CAR still thousands of desperate people live in fear and foreign troops complicate the truce.
Northern Uganda continues (even with all the efforts of so many) to suffer the consequence of the megalomania of a few twisted leaders.

And similarly the indescribable tragedy of Zimbabwe and the weak response of SADAC break the hearts to the point of tears for all who have lived or worked there over the years. Contagion and hunger reigns.

War ridden Afghanistan and Sri Lanka continue to hang in the balance where civilians are forced from their homes with little hope of cessation of violence.

Failed states such as Somalia are the frightening bell-weather of the mad max movie future of other marginal countries.

Darfur persists as one of the world’s most intractable conflicts, affecting all countries on its borders.

And of course the recent horror of Gaza and before it Lebanon remind us of what happens when developed countries seek to impose an ill defined democracy by means of disproportional force or support for armed groups or political entities that will inevitably turn on their creators.

The international financial downturn is affecting all of us. But what must be most worrying for humanitarians is that the 2015 Millennium Development Goals will be set back, exacerbating further the suffering of those who live on a dollar or two a day. The economic crisis also limits more progressive treatment by Western countries of those fleeing persecution or economic hardship. And inevitably climate change pressures particularly around shortage of water and other resources will exacerbate conflicts. All the while humanitarian space is being threatened by military encroachment, as governments are not able to provide protection for people in the situations described or security or safety for aid workers.

II. In light of these and other overarching challenges how are we doing as ICVA in meeting the main strategic goals? Do we provide in the words of 2005 evaluation a “valuable competitive advantage? What, in the Bard’s words, have we done and do we intend?

We are stronger and more relevant than at any time since (and maybe before) our near death experience of 1997. Thanks to you our members as you have embraced and faithfully contributed according to the new dues structure, and, to our government donors (especially Nordics, UK, Dutch and Swiss) who have steadily increased major commitments.

Serious progress has been made in disseminating and raising awareness on humanitarian principles including on the follow up with the ICVA/SCHR Commentary on the Code of Conduct.

Collective thinking has improved and member agencies have met more often in the regions. Still more needs to be done in providing opportunities for ICVA members in the South to engage in international policy debates and processes.

The limiting of support for specific parallel rather than interfacing projects has been accomplished in part by passing on the responsibility for managing *The Building Safer Organizations Project (BSO)* to the Humanitarian Accountability Project (HAP).

Secretariat appeals for an active participation in the IASC working groups and principals’ meeting and other coordinating mechanisms has brought more faithfully the data and stories from our member field operations. This has culminated in a now more representative body with almost equal
representation between the UN members and the non-UN “standing invitees” in the twice-yearly ERC meetings of principals. This forum, in which humanitarian coordination is still more of an art than a science, is being enhanced by the wisdom and energy of now 6 official NGO participants at the table from InterAction, SCHR and ICVA. This gives us the flexibility and continuity while sending our best resource experts from our wider membership on a given agenda item while having continuity in representation with a member of the EXCOM and/or a secretariat staff in order to improve substantive debate.

ICVA secretariat staff conducted missions to DRC with OCHA on Clusters and to Algeria Sahara refugee camps to ascertain the possibility of an ICVA initiative. EXCOM members participated spontaneously in several ad hoc CERF/Cluster and UN Reform partnership building workshops as requested in regular parent organization field travel. One result of ICVA’s efforts has been that NGO field representatives are now more incorporated in UN country team meetings and in some cases even in the position of co-chair. But pushing for greater field impact and improved participation by local NGOs is still in need of more attention, critical, as well is providing indicators to measure results.

ICVA played a major role in the discussions on how NGOs can benefit from CERF funding and management of overhead costs, and on the aid granting governments’ “Humanitarian Donorship Initiative”. At the Humanitarian Financing discussions in the annual Montreux retreat the donors’ received with interest ICVA experiences and suggestions for improving the funding system. As well ICVA played the major role in the founding of Global Humanitarian Partnership and the drafting and distribution of the Principles of Partnership. We focused more intentionally and productively on the International Disaster Response Laws/Rules/Principles (IDRL). Continued strategic engagement is needed in these areas.

As previously mentioned, the post-tsunami evaluations brought new accountability systems. We have worked better and more closely with others, as we had to face the immense challenges of human made and natural disasters. Our appeals for members to embrace the SPHERE humanitarian principles and active ICVA participation in drafting the Commentary on the Code of Conduct for the NGOs and Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement are indicative of encouragement to one another to improve quality and oversight on such matters as minimum standards in disasters and prevention of sexual exploitation.

Advocacy for NGO staff to be nominated and trained for the UN Humanitarian Coordinator positions has moved apace with a new call for candidates after a disappointing start with rejection our first candidate, Elizabeth Rasmusson of NRC, not because of her fault but rather inadequate organizational preparation liaison with the Government of Uganda.

Before a more recent stricter rule on NGO statements to the UNHCR Standing Committee and Executive Committee meetings, ICVA elicited supportive responses from the High Commissioner and his staff. The stated intention of continuing to make UNHCR the primary agency for collaboration has been met. Drafting participation by Southern NGOs has increased. As a result exploration has begun on how to deepen partnerships with other UN agencies such as the High Commission for Human Rights, WFP and UNICEF. ICVA seized in the past three years unprecedented opportunities to shape relations with the UN.

III. What are some of the Challenges for the next 3 years?

In terms of membership in the last three years while we steadily added 18 new members to our numbers unfortunately we have lost twelve of our Southern participants which puts us at risk of not
being as inclusive and geographically representative as we intend. While our new membership criteria and statute changes will add substantive transparency and accountability to your and potential members’ association with ICVA, North/South balance surely will be a challenge for our new EXCOM in the next three years. Outreach is too big a job for a few. All members but especially EXCOM’s engagement, closely coordinating with the Secretariat, can help enormously to spread the word and encourage others to join the association if they meet our commitment to adding quality over quantity.

We still need to increase our attention to local and national capacity enhancement, finding ways to improve information exchange and sharpen advocacy for our field partners in international forums. Information tools such as Talk Back can be made even more regular and profound in impact.

There is more to do on the stated goals of “faith based” NGO dialogues around humanitarian principles. As well the task remains difficult in consolidating advocacy positions.

Surely the successful launch and developing strategy the ICVA-HFP will be a major initiative that we “do” which “bets what is [already] done” in strengthening ICVA to help in setting the global humanitarian agenda and adapting to new challenges, but will require Secretariat and EXCOM attention to fulfil its promise.

We need to widen our geographic possibly regional representation and improve the inclusion of local and national partners especially on disaster response. Further proactive participation is important in the ongoing UN Reform process so that we ensure NGO participation in the decision-making mechanisms and structures of the UN. As well the matter of military-humanitarian interface will continue to be a troubling reality that demands further attention as governments seem inclined to give more to “defence” than humanitarian budgets. Protecting humanitarian space is going to be a persistent and growing challenge. These matters and others have been/will be put before you for consideration in the 2009 – 2011 Strategic Plan.

In summary ICVA has in large measure fulfilled the stated goals of the 2006 Strategic Plan by stabilizing finances, bringing better cohesion on policy issues, enhancing information sharing, “deepening relationships with the ICVA network”, and promoting “humanitarian principles”. The Global Humanitarian Platform and the Humanitarian Futures Project may well be the critical hinges as we move beyond rhetoric for our next 45 years of improved and more influential collaboration with the other partners in the humanitarian enterprise. The mapping of humanitarian reform will surely result in better community-wide inputs.

IV. Closing words of appreciation:

It is time now to express my personal affection and our corporate deep appreciation for the quite remarkable, proficient professional staff of the ICVA Secretariat and the very faithful members of the Executive Committee who have given their time and wisdom, sometimes quite sacrificially when all of them have other taxing responsibilities.

A word of enthusiastic and very sincere thanks is due to our treasurer Jappe Erichsen and, when ill, his stand-in Paul Nesse from NRC. They brought much more incisive and careful oversight to our financial structure, inspired energetic fundraising and tighter cost control and diminished the stress around this important part of our responsibility. We are well in the “black” and have paid our long-
term loan to ever patient and gracious Swedish IM/SOIR to whom we are eternally indebted for their generous support for our Phoenix-like rise from the ashes.

Thank you for the privilege of being closely associated with you. As some of you know I accepted the role of chair reluctantly believing that among other reasons it was inappropriate for an officer of one of the larger faith based agencies, founded in America, to serve during this time of such US government belligerence and international insensitivity. Now however (no longer having to pretend when travelling that I am a Canadian) I can say sincerely it has been a blessing for me to be associated with all of you. I must thank my parent organization as well for WVI carried me for an extra year so I could fulfil this satisfying responsibility. It has been a capstone to my professional career to see so intimately what a profound and contributing consortium ICVA is and to learn so much from staff and board and our UN and Red Cross/Red Crescent colleagues here and in the field. May your arms not grow weary or your hearts faint. I want to extend heartfelt gratitude to the Secretariat for the patience and the membership for perspective given to me through the wider partner associations in the past three years.

I can go now to my delayed retirement able to report that ICVA is healthier in our relationships with the humanitarian family and stronger financially than we were 3 years ago; and, on solid ground to move steadily toward fulfilling the strategic goals. It is my expectation that those of you who will serve on the new EXCOM will have even more responsibility and commensurate satisfaction for expectations are high in the wider community. ICVA’s reputation, largely because of the illustrious professional work of the extraordinarily competent secretariat, has not been so high since its founding years. ICVA is being closely watched and depended upon for the necessary work to bring countless people hope and sister organizations clearer humanitarian vision. Please know that I, and others who will not be on the EXCOM after tomorrow, stand ready to be of any appropriate assistance necessary from a rejuvenated Washington DC and our other onward cities. Thank you and go with my prayers for even more success in the days ahead.

Tom Getman
EXCOM Chair, 2006-2008
ANNEX 3: GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDANCE NOTES

Group Discussions on Issues Central to ICVA’s Draft Strategic Plan 2009-2011
Wednesday, 4 February, 09:00-11:15

GROUP I: DRAFT ACTION PLAN ICVA-HFP PROJECT

In order to help members decide on the various elements included in the draft Strategic Plan, we will be breaking into four groups to discuss particular elements in greater detail. A Moderator will facilitate the group’s discussion and a Rapporteur will provide a ten minute report to the plenary session on the Strategic Plan this afternoon.

Introduction:
Since early 2008, ICVA has worked together with Humanitarian Futures Programme (HFP) in a project that looks at the future of collaboration in the humanitarian sector. Some 15 ICVA member agencies have participated in this project, which will have as its main products: an Action Plan on collaboration for ICVA; a study on collaboration (that covers, among others, the conceptual framework, forms of collaboration, experiences, benefits, risks, etc); and simulation exercises on futures’ scenarios that help members and other organisations to collaborate better. Overall, the project’s outcome will provide a much better sense of the added value that collaboration will bring to individual agencies’ work, to the ICVA network, as well as to the sector as a whole. The starting point is the general acknowledgment that no single agency can respond to all humanitarian crises and needs on its own and that, as such, collaboration is an essential element of humanitarian action in order to meet needs. The project is premised on the assumption that better collaboration will lead to improved humanitarian outcomes.

Issues for Discussion:

- Most collaboration in the ICVA network happens between the (individual) member organisation(s) and the Secretariat. How important is collaboration among member agencies to the ICVA network? Do member agencies need ICVA/the ICVA Secretariat in order to help them collaborate?
- Do you agree with the HFP/ICVA project assumption that the importance of collaboration will increase overtime in the light of the increased complexity and occurrence of natural disasters under the influence of climate change, scarcity of (natural) resources, and population movements? Natural disasters may converge (even) more with man-made crisis disasters in terms of underlying causes and complexity creating new vulnerable populations, including in mega-cities which traditionally have not been areas of operations for many humanitarian organisations. Bearing in mind yesterday’s simulation exercise, what are the conditions for the humanitarian community to be able to respond effectively to these new environments?
- What are your thoughts and views on ICVA organising regional workshops and events around futures’ scenarios at the regional level, supporting regionalisation, and regional networks? How can this support be provided without the ICVA Secretariat overstretching itself? Do agree with the direction and actions proposed in the Draft Action Plan (pp. 10-15)?

Expected Outcomes:

- Agree, as a group, on whether collaboration, in particular in the context of humanitarian futures, is a theme for ICVA to continue working on as suggested in the Strategic Plan.
- Agree, as a group, on the role and services of the ICVA Secretariat in the context of supporting collaboration among member agencies.
- Achieve an understanding whether the (Draft) Action Plan provides a direction for ICVA to go into for the coming three year period and beyond?
- Make commitments on hosting or participating in regional events on collaboration in the context futures’ scenarios.
GROUP 2: COLLABORATION AMONG ICVA MEMBERS AT THE FIELD LEVEL

In order to help members decide on the various elements included in the draft Strategic Plan, we will be breaking into four groups to discuss particular elements in greater detail. A Moderator will facilitate the group’s discussion and a Rapporteur will provide a ten minute report to the plenary session on the Strategic Plan in the afternoon.

Moderator: Kerren Hedlund, NGO Liaison Officer, Myanmar
Rapporteur: Deepesh Sinha, All India Disaster Mitigation Institute

Introduction:
Each time that ICVA members come together at the General Assembly, there is usually a great deal of enthusiasm for working together. That enthusiasm, however, seems to waiver after the meetings with many ICVA members not working with others, especially in terms of operational response. The draft Strategic Plan 2009-2011 highlights a number of areas where ICVA members will be called upon to work more closely together in the coming years. In 2007, the ICVA Executive Committee agreed to put aside reserves to allow for the deployment of an NGO liaison officer in the case of an emergency response. During the response to cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, the fund was used to put in place an NGO liaison officer (LO) who placed an important role in terms of linking national and international NGOs, as well as ensuring that national NGOs were engaged in the various response coordination mechanisms. The NGO LO also was key in terms of bringing together aspects of quality and accountability in the response. In the draft Strategic Plan 2009-2011, collaboration between ICVA members is key to making ICVA more relevant – particularly in terms of better bridging the gap between practice and policy. Translating the objective of getting members to collaborate more will, however, require a great deal of work.

Issues for Discussion:
♦ Is collaboration between ICVA members at the field level a desirable and realistic objective? If collaboration is seen to be desirable and/or realistic, how can it be achieved?
♦ If collaboration between members can be made to work, how can that collaboration be harnessed to bridge the gap between practice and policy, particularly in terms of influencing international debates?
♦ What would be the most useful support that ICVA could provide in terms of field level response?
♦ What do you think of having joint ICVA-Sphere-HAP field deployments in humanitarian responses, where ICVA would provide the NGO liaison, bridging the gap between policy and practice, linking NNGOs and INGOs, and advocacy; Sphere would provide the guidance on quality responses; and HAP (Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International) would contribute to building the link with beneficiaries to ensure accountability?

Expected Outcomes:
♦ Agree on what collaboration between ICVA members should look like, particularly at the field level, and how that can be achieved.
♦ Propose a way forward for ICVA to support field level responses, which could include support not only for improved coordination, but also for improved quality-oriented and accountable programmes.
♦ Determine how best to bridge the gap between policy and practice, including in terms of providing feedback to the ICVA Secretariat to influence policy debates.
**GROUP 3: MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENTS**

In order to help members decide on the various elements included in the draft Strategic Plan, we will be breaking into four groups to discuss particular elements in greater detail. A Moderator will facilitate the group’s discussion and a Rapporteur will provide a ten minute report to the plenary session on the Strategic Plan in the afternoon.

**Moderator:** Dale Buscher, Women’s Refugee Commission  
**Rapporteur:** Judy Wakahiu, Refugee Consortium of Kenya

**Introduction:**
In 2007, the ICVA Executive Committee took a deliberate decision to work towards ensuring that the ICVA membership be one known for its quality-oriented and accountable work. As a first step, the membership requirements for new members were amended to be along these lines, including requiring new members to explain how they incorporate the *Principles of Partnership* in their programmes, how they incorporate the Sphere standards, how ensure implementation of the *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief (Code of Conduct)* in their work, and what procedures they have put into place to prevent and respond to allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation. These requirements, however, only apply to new members and are reflected in the by-law on membership. There is currently no means of ensuring that ICVA members also use these tools. At the same time, the requirement to report on how these instruments are implemented is quite superficial. There is no way to actually ensure that members are truly adhering to the Code of Conduct or incorporating the *Principles of Partnership*, for example. The Executive Committee felt that the membership needs to come to an agreement on what it means to be an ICVA member and what should be required of members, if ICVA is to become known as a network of quality-oriented and accountable NGOs.

Parallel to putting in place stricter criteria for new and existing members, there is also a need to reflect on what it means to be an ICVA member, given that the network is only as strong as it members. Currently, the ICVA Secretariat puts out calls to members for their feedback on various aspects of humanitarian response and policy. The representation role that the Secretariat is expected play is only as effective as the information it gets from its members. Yet, in many cases, the Secretariat is forced to “represent” the membership on the basis of minimal (if any) feedback from members and so must use its general knowledge of subjects and the views of members.

**Issues for Discussion:**
- How far should ICVA go in terms of trying to ensure it is known as an NGO network of quality-oriented and accountable NGOs?
- Given the limited size of the ICVA Secretariat (which is unlikely to grow in the current financial climate), what kind of role should ICVA have in monitoring the work of its members?
- Should there be a merger between the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International (HAP) and ICVA?
- What does membership in ICVA mean, e.g. in terms of replying to calls for feedback, working with other members?
- How can the ICVA network become more representative of the views of its members?
- How do you feel about collaboration between ICVA members a requirement of membership?

**Expected Outcomes:**
- Agree on the type of approach towards quality and accountability within ICVA: i.e. whether it should be a voluntary or more rigorously enforced. If the latter, how should it be enforced?
- Come to an agreement on whether collaboration should be a requirement of membership and, if so, how it can be enforced.
- Develop a clear outline of how to ensure members are more active in terms of providing engaging in the work of ICVA, including in setting the humanitarian agenda.
GROUP 4: CHANGE AND LEADERSHIP IN THE HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

In order to help members decide on the various elements included in the draft Strategic Plan, we will be breaking into four groups to discuss particular elements in greater detail. A Moderator will facilitate the group’s discussion and a Rapporteur will provide a ten minute report to the plenary session on the Strategic Plan this afternoon.

Introduction:
Change and leadership are two closely connected issues as (real) change in the humanitarian community requires strong and competent leadership. In this sense, leadership can come from organisations, such as ICVA, and from individuals.

Since early 2008, ICVA has worked together with Humanitarian Futures Programme (HFP) in a project that looks at the future of collaboration in the humanitarian sector. Some 15 ICVA member agencies have participated in this project, which will have as its main products: an Action Plan on collaboration for ICVA; a study on collaboration (that covers, among others, the conceptual framework, forms of collaboration, experiences, benefits, risks, etc); and simulation exercises on futures’ scenarios that help members and other organisations to collaborate better. Overall, the project’s outcome will provide a much better sense of the added value that collaboration will bring to individual agencies’ work, to the ICVA network, as well as to the sector as a whole. The starting point is the general acknowledgment that no single agency can respond to all humanitarian crises and needs on its own and that, as such, collaboration is an essential element of humanitarian action in order to meet needs. The project is premised on the assumption that better collaboration will lead to improved humanitarian outcomes.

Issues for Discussion:
- Most collaboration in the ICVA network happens between the (individual) member organisation(s) and the Secretariat. How important is collaboration among member agencies to the ICVA network? Do member agencies need ICVA/the ICVA Secretariat in order to help them collaborate?
- Do you agree with the HFP/ICVA project assumption that the importance of collaboration will increase overtime in the light of the increased complexity and occurrence of natural disasters under the influence of climate change, scarcity of (natural) resources, and population movements? Natural disasters may converge (even) more with man-made crisis disasters in terms of underlying causes and complexity creating new vulnerable populations, including in mega-cities which traditionally have not been areas of operations for many humanitarian organisations. Bearing in mind yesterday’s simulation exercise, what are the conditions for the humanitarian community to be able to respond effectively to these new environments?
- What are your thoughts and views on ICVA organising regional workshops and events around futures’ scenarios at the regional level, supporting regionalisation, and regional networks? How can this support be provided without the ICVA Secretariat overstretched itself? Do agree with the direction and actions proposed in the Draft Action Plan (pp. 10-15)?

Expected Outcomes:
- Agree, as a group, on whether collaboration, in particular in the context of humanitarian futures, is a theme for ICVA the continue working on as suggested in the Strategic Plan.