

Aide- Mémoire

MeTA International Advisory Group (IAG)

Meeting: 8 April 2009, 9:00-17:30, London



MeTA IAG Participants

Sophia Tickell	MIAG Chair, SustainAbility
Mavis Owusu-Gyamfi	Department of International Development (DFID)
Frédérique Santerre	The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA)
Dilip Shah	Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA)
David Jamieson	Supply Chain Management
John McHale	Fidelity Management and Research (UK) Inc.
Madike Seye	GlaxoSmithKline
Tim Reed	Health Action International (HAI)
Eva Ombaka	Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network (EPN)
Richard Calland	Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA)
Armin Fidler	World Bank
Paul Lartey	Ghana MeTA Representative
Abu Al-Samen Taher	Jordan MeTA Representative
Rustam Kurmanov	Kyrgyzstan MeTA Representative
Elías Melitón Arce	Peru MeTA Representative
Kenneth Hartigan-Go	Philippines MeTA Representative
Seru Morries	Uganda MeTA Representative
Goodwell Lungu	Zambia MeTA Representative

MIAG Observers

Saul Walker	DFID
Geraldine Murphy	DFID

MeTA Secretariat

Brian Elliott	Executive Director
Wilbert Bannenberg	Technical Director
Elodie Brandamir	Operations Director
Alison Dunn	Publications and Editorial Manager
Deepthi Wickremasinghe	Information and Knowledge Manager

1. Welcome and introductions

Sophia Tickell, Chair, opened the meeting by welcoming and thanking the MeTA IAG members for their attendance. She mentioned especially how good it was to have representatives from all seven countries present. She noted that the meeting would be recorded with an Aide Mémoire to be put on the MeTA website, with all presentations. Sophia laid the ground rules for the meeting and reminded IAG members of their role: to provide counsel and advice on key issues and to highlight current trends in the sector that may have an influence on MeTA.

2. Country update

Paul Larrey from LaGray Chemical Company, Ghana and representative of the MeTA Ghana Council made a presentation on behalf of all the country representatives to show the progress they have made and the lessons learnt. He noted that all countries are at different stages and they have all experienced some successes. They have taken common steps taken to get the work started and each is particularly proud of a key success. Ghana: the establishment of private sector representation. Jordan: full support of the Government and private sector. Kyrgyzstan: identifying the stakeholders and approval of the workplan. Peru: signing the MOU. The Philippines: establishing successful forums and especially the running of the CSO forum. Uganda: a successful launch and receipt of funds for work to start. Zambia: a successful launch and plenty of media interest.

The challenges they have faced include: getting stakeholder engagement and maintaining interest; insufficient legislation/regulation and excessive bureaucracy; difficulties in extracting information; and lack of tools for accessing information.

The main lessons learned included: the underpinning MeTA principle of establishing consensus requires a constant, updated exchange of views; commitment of people is key, if you don't have committed people, multi-stakeholder processes will not work; the legal status of MeTA is unclear and needs clarification; support of International MeTA Secretariat is vital; MeTA members can learn from each other on how to shape government policy and other issues; staying focused on the objectives will drive the process forward; actors in MeTA need medicines and management expertise; MeTA does not operate in a political vacuum and this will affect its success.

Questions followed from the IAG members around the size of MeTA Councils, governance arrangements and information about workplans that have been approved. Armin Fidler of the World Bank reminded country representatives that they are able to use the World Bank to facilitate processes in their countries and they should see him as a point of contact to create links and channel messages. Brian Elliott, Executive Director of MeTA, thanked the country groups for the stunning work they have done so far.

Action points:

- MeTA country representatives should feel free to contact Armin Fidler, but were requested to inform the International Secretariat when they do so, to avoid confusion and duplication.
- International Secretariat to distribute full country plans to IAG members.
- International Secretariat to distribute list of participants and the sector each represents to the IAG.

3. Advocacy in MeTA: the role of CSOs in delivering transparency in medicines to markets

Goodwell Lungu, Transparency International and MeTA Zambia representative, made a presentation about advocacy and the role of CSOs in MeTA. He articulated the importance of advocacy and provided a tool to help understand the different types of advocacy that exist: individual (representing the interests of one or two people), systematic (attempting to change and influence systems) and self (seeking to resolve and address a collective need). He looked firstly at why advocacy programmes fail, then at the criteria that contribute to successful advocacy including the need to: have good knowledge about the problem; build skills to promote greater transparency; build in skills in engaging with national policy processes; develop skills and knowledge in our priority areas in MeTA; and use the new skills and knowledge to strengthen policy and advocacy engagement.

He argued that the key issue is that when CSOs are engaging stakeholders they are also creating space for those affected to state for themselves what their problem is.

The IAG raised the following issues during the discussion that followed:

- It is important to find a process that gives CSOs a legitimate voice and a clear mandate because they are likely to enter into discussions of this nature at a disadvantage in terms of political weight;
- It is important for CSOs to have relevant technical information so that they can participate fully;
- Retaining independence of voice is critical and CSOs need support to ensure that they are not accused of being co-opted or regarded as losing their independence, or seeking involvement due to funding opportunities;
- The focus on seeking consensus can be problematic and lead to the avoidance of discussion of contested issues. MeTA should be mindful of how groups manage these different roles of consensus; seek to create space to permit divergent views; insist on disclosure of conflicts of interest, to ensure accountability; and seek to create a process that actively recognises that the value of the multi-stakeholder process lies in discussing difficult and contentious issues, as a means of articulating views and understanding other perspectives, and eventually therefore solving the problem;

- The nature of civil society representation on the MeTA Councils needs to be explicit. Care should be taken to ensure that CSOs represented receive appropriate information on a regular and iterative basis to ensure their views fully inform the representation;
- It was recommended that IAG members should declare conflicts of interest to send out a message to others involved in this transparency initiative;
- MeTA has a role to play in supporting CSOs to become co-owners of problems, and thereby co-owners of solutions, and
- Advocacy can fail for the following reasons: the alliance lacks a shared vision statement, key concepts/principles are not agreed or followed, expectations are unrealistic, the budget is not planned adequately, and the process lacks a coherent advocacy plan.

The following country-specific inputs were made: Jordan is interested in involving the 50-70 independent CSOs in the country. The MeTA Secretariat will discuss whether it can play a support role in identifying where they are active, and helping them to develop into an alliance with a revolving lead. Peru seeks to avoid corruption and is confident that Peruvian CSOs trust the process sufficiently to participate. The Philippines highlighted the importance of the CSO forum. It permits them to understand what MeTA is and how they can get involved.

Brian Elliot concluded that the International Secretariat is actively continuing support in the capacity strengthening of CSOs. The development of governance processes, including that of electing a Steering Committee, defining the role of the Council, etc are critical. For many countries, multi-stakeholder processes are new and require templates on how they work and tools for gathering and sharing information. The International Secretariat is committed to supporting lesson transfers in and between countries.

4. Industry at a cross-roads and how this impacts in-country

Sophia presented the Pharma Futures report of an investor-led dialogue about the challenges and opportunities of emerging markets from the perspective of industry and its investors. The main findings of the report were that developing country markets are critical to the industry going forward. To achieve a better balance between social and investor needs, the market needs clearer signals from the pharma industry about emerging market opportunities, the business models they require and the investments they need. Pharma companies need to adapt their business models from those developed for western markets with robust health infrastructures, to models that account for the distribution and pricing realities of emerging markets. To meet market potential, companies need to develop business models that are human-centred, affordable and accessible. The relevance to MeTA is that there is an interest in developing country markets; a willingness to experiment with new business models and demonstrable good practice coming from outside the conventional market; and new investor interest in and awareness of risks and opportunities and the potential for new collaboration.

Eva Obmaka gave a response. She commented on equitable pricing, financing issues, and influencing policy. She asked in what ways industry will address equitable pricing for treatments for chronic disease, and ensure transparency? She asked how to differentiate payment by poor people between choice and necessity? How will the promotion of drugs be managed? And on policy, she raised important issues about transparency on companies' public positions noting that pharma companies have a big social contract and should look at being social enterprises. Human-centred issues are a high ideal but are also important.

The IAG raised the following points during the discussion:

- There are interesting volume-based business models being developed in emerging and other markets by the aviation and mobile phone industries. These models may be problematic for pharma e.g. airlines cannot transfer tickets in the way medicines can be transferred;
- Generics firms already represent a volume-based business model, and the IAG expressed interest in understanding whether investors are investing in these firms;
- One reason for high pricing is that pharmaceutical R&D is highly expensive when undertaken in the West. It would be much cheaper in emerging markets;
- Markets are most efficient when focusing on simple metrics. Quantifying the complexity of human suffering, wellbeing or human development is not something they are well suited to do;
- The lack of state healthcare provision and weak distribution systems are important factors in why so many poor people pay out of pocket and are therefore particularly price sensitive;
- Corporate Social Responsibility is not the key driver for current pharmaceutical activity in developing countries. Rather, it is due to increased commercial opportunities and the slow down of growth in mature markets. There is a growing recognition that the new markets require the exploration of new business models, and
- Brian concluded by presenting the International MeTA Secretariat's private sector strategy, which aims to involve the private sector more fully both on the ground and in the IAG. He ratified the importance of involving both big pharma and the generics industry. The International Secretariat will be seeking the support of IAG members in the development of this strategy and for a private sector away day in June.

5. The added value of MeTA and linkages with other initiatives

Richard Calland gave a presentation about other international multi-stakeholder initiatives such as EITI and CoST, related civil society campaigns such as 'Publish What You Pay' and other international transparency civil society initiatives. He discussed the need for strong Freedom of Information laws. He then asked IAG members to discuss in small groups: which entities MeTA should engage with nationally and internationally; what identity (including legal identity) MeTA should

have in the participating countries; which private sector actors are the most powerful and how MeTA should prioritise who to work with.

The small groups responded as follows:

Who are the entities to engage with internationally?

MeTA should engage with organisations that are: international and independent. They also need to be transparent in their business interface; have experience and a track record of success; be looking at transaction costs relating to organisations; have a willingness to participate; be active in advocacy; and have similar values to MeTA. Suggestions included: Transparency International (because it uses transparency as an approach that can be applied in a number of different ways), the Carter Center (because it has an authority and connection with democracy and negotiation and has done work on recognising the difficulties of this – and because of its value system and modus operandi). It is also key that some big players in global health - Global Fund, GAVI - should at least sign up to the principles of MeTA. WHO is important at country level especially for creating/providing legitimacy for MeTA. Government and UN special agencies such as the UN Special Rapporteur, UNCTAD and NICE (UK) were also mentioned. A number of civil society organisations were mentioned, including Public Citizen in the US (although it was recognised that its work is exclusively US focused).

- It was noted that this is a shopping list which needs to be narrowed down.

What personality or identity should MeTA have internationally?

The IAG made a number of suggestions about how MeTA should be governed and perceived, including; that it should continue to be a loose alliance, in reflection of its multi-stakeholder identity which, while a strength, also makes it more difficult to establish a single legal entity. At international level it was recommended that MeTA review how EITI has established a stand alone entity and consider moving in a similar direction. Personality traits for MeTA include: inclusive, independent, having multiple perspectives around the table, local ownership and local implementation of principles (this is crucial). Countries should own these developments to make them happen. At a country level MeTA needs well articulated core principles that allow it to be a trusted voice. It should be country-led – a global campaign, but with local focus. It needs a slogan to get its core identity concerning transparency across to the wider world. In conclusion, MeTA needs to be an independent, international alliance, with a charter and set of core values, which is doing global and local work, and setting new standards for transparency in the medicines market place.

6. Key takeaways for the International Secretariat and MeTA Management Board

Brian shared his thoughts on what he had heard from the meeting. He noted that the situation has changed dramatically in MeTA since the last IAG meeting and that the role of MeTA will evolve as the programme evolves in the countries. He said that the

critical success is that MeTA has engaged with stakeholders and taken the initiative to the starting line in all seven countries involved in the pilot phase. The challenge moving forward will be to sustain stakeholder interest. The second challenge is to start disclosing data and undertaking workplans. He acknowledged the gaps in stakeholder representation in some of the countries and the need to identify those gaps and fill them appropriately. The MeTA Councils need to attract and secure the presence of all stakeholders. Another major challenge is to analyse, disseminate and discuss the information that is needed to promote transparency and accountability. He argued that the civil society representation would consist of ensuring that civil society groups are properly identified, well-organised and democratically elected into a cohesive group. Representatives need to create a strong realistic agenda of what they expect of MeTA and work on the assumption that all stakeholders have the right to be heard respectfully. They will need support and equipment to do this so that they can extract the maximum value from their participation in the MeTA Council.

Brian acknowledged that there are some issues that need to be addressed in greater depth, e.g. the issue of the imbalance of power. The selection of participants has to be done to optimise the power balance within the MeTA Councils and all stakeholders need to be properly empowered in proportion to the other players sitting around the table. He requested that the IAG inform the International Secretariat of any guidelines that they know of on these matters.

Regarding the private sector session, Brian noted insufficient time to consider these complex and vast issues in great detail. He explained that this vital analysis of the role of this important stakeholder needs to be broken down within the sector and disaggregated into achievable tasks, objectives and targets for the International MeTA Secretariat to be involved with. A good start would be to map out which conversations it needs to have most urgently.

Requests to the International Secretariat from the IAG

The International Secretariat was asked to:

- Prepare a paper around the identity of MeTA for the next IAG meeting.
- Send country workplans and a list of council members in countries to all IAG members.
- Send information about the MeTA website and blog and how the IAG can become involved in the discussions.
- Prepare an 'elevator' speech or brief electronic explanation of MeTA.

Request to IAG from the International Secretariat:

- The International Secretariat appreciates the information that IAG members give them and would like them to be vigilant and send news, reports etc for the newsletter and website.
- The International Secretariat may from time to time ask members to contribute articles for newsletters, the website and blog (MeTA Dialogue).
- The International Secretariat is happy to accept Armin Fidler's offer to be a point of contact for the World Bank, but would like to be copied into the loop. It will also discuss similar role with WHO.
- If IAG members have ideas for appropriate messages to be disseminated about MeTA please get in touch.
- The potential ambassadorial role of IAG members was also discussed.

Ideas for future discussion and the next IAG

- Review of the process whereby the International Secretariat supports the pilot countries. At what point are the MeTA Councils expected to stand alone, without International Secretariat input?
- Further private sector review in order to report back at the end of the pilot phase. Would the International Secretariat benefit from a small, six-month sub-working group to look at what the most effective entry point for MeTA is on this topic?
- Presentation of country healthcare systems (health insurance, expenditure etc) from countries participating in MeTA, to outline and learn from the different challenges that people face and the approaches they take.
- How do we identify and work with less obvious partners not usually associated with health? For example, the ministries of finance or ministries of education?