

State of the Coalition presentation

by John Skibiak

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Good morning, friends and colleagues,

This time last year, I stood before you in Mexico City. It was our 10th birthday and there was much to celebrate. We had not just survived a decade, we had grown and thrived. Our membership had reached 300 and for the first time our developing country partners outnumbered those from what, Australia and New Zealand, excluded, we euphemistically call the Global North.

But 2014 was in many ways a threshold – a threshold into a new decade that we entered confidently, but also with a watchful eye. We took confidence in the fact that we had a new strategy to guide our decisions. We had a better grasp of what makes us tick – a better sense of the levers that allow us to bring about change. We were well into a new way of working – one that saw us not just as a convener, (though that remains critically important) , but also as a trailblazer, launching new initiatives in market shaping, eliminating stockouts and helping country partners deliver on promises.

But we were also, as I said, gazing at the horizon with a watchful eye. For some, storm clouds were forming – and they were forming in connection with what was increasingly being referred to as the post 2015 development agenda and more specifically, the new global architecture for international development. At that point in time, the most visible manifestation of that architecture was the still very nascent Global Financing Facility. Many of us were concerned.

I can remember the questions. Would a global fund combining assistance for reproductive health AND maternal health AND newborn and child health AND adolescent health pit our traditionally underfunded (and let's face it, controversial) work against the unassailable duo of mothers and babies? Would it, yet again, force decision makers to choose between prevention and cure? Would a global fund draw resources away from global donors?

You – the members in this room – called on us to act as standard bearers for the interests of the RH community –channeling important news from all the global chatter to help us understand what was happening; and to relay the views of a better-informed RH community to those in decision-making roles within the structures of the evolving GFF.

We took on that challenge. One by one, we began connecting the dots, linking colleagues on the GFF's business planning team (John T, Jagdish with the support of FP2020) with the broader RH community (from advocates to manufacturers to donors). And out of that interface emerged issues that our A&A Working Group framed into a global position statement which, in turn proved critical in rallying members from across our community.

In the end, we got the voice of RH to be heard loud and clear – in fact I think the perception among some was that we were hogging the airwaves. But we didn't let up – and the voices were amplified through regular e-blasts, through our newsletters, and through our weekly advisory calls whose

membership now totals over 60. We used the Innovation Fund to assess the impact of new global financing mechanisms on RH commodity security; and then we supported IPPF to put those findings to use on the ground. In the end, we even had the World Bank turning to us to learn of developments.

And as the GFF moved from conceptualization to action, we were able to leverage that voice and knowledge to spark movement on the ground. As country-level investment plans were being developed, we worked behind the scenes to get civil society engaged and to raise the profile of family planning. And those efforts quickly bore fruit. In Kenya and the DRC – family planning and commodity security emerged as clear-cut priorities within their investment plans.

We can all take pride in these successes – and many in our community (PAI, IPPF, GHC, etc.) have already embarked on efforts to transfer the lessons we have learned to a new wave of countries now coming on board.

But for me, the real achievement is perhaps less about these initial successes than what it says about us as a community – and as a Coalition. What it's shown is that the future is, in many ways, ours to shape. What we call the new global architecture will offer both opportunities and challenges, but what we make of them ultimately rests with us. And so it is that experience – the experience of the last nine months that has shaped the agenda of our meeting today and tomorrow. Armed with the tools that gave us confidence last year, and a better sense of the barriers that impede our work.

Not just about post-2015

But this year has not just been about defining our role in the post 2015 agenda

It has been a year of remarkable success – a year in which we saw our four strategic pillars rise up from the pages of a glossy report, and not only begin to shape our work, but actually start yielding results. And over the course of the next two days, you will be seeing and hearing much more about them.

Later today, you will be hearing about the successes of our Innovation Fund, which are making historic changes around the world. Our new website, launched in June, is attracting more than double the number of visits the old site used to. We will share with you our work, now getting underway, in getting RH supplies into the hands of young women. And we will hear about new initiatives within our Maternal Health Caucus.

But there are some notable achievements out there that will not be headline grabbers, and it is those that I would like to focus on here – because many of them say a lot in their own way about who we are and the value we bring to our community.

Last January, Ghana's Central Medical Store witnessed a devastating fire that destroyed over \$60M worth of goods and supplies. It will, of course, take years for the country to fully recover from such destruction, but we can all be extremely proud of the role our CARhs group played in helping USAID and UNFPA spring into action, expediting the shipment of tens of thousands of female condoms and oral contraceptives. We also saw the CARhs realize nearly half a million in savings by redirecting excess stocks of implants and IUDs to countries where they could be used. And we saw the CARhs' sister workstream, the Coordinated Supply Planning Group (or CSP for short), drive the procurement of US\$2.2 million of commodities to avert stockouts of both DMPA and oral contraceptives.

These are tremendous results – but the fact is, many of them have relied on software and databases developed by us almost a decade ago. The RHI, for example, still remains the cornerstone of nearly all the forecasts, projections and analyses being undertaken in our field. But it is, in many ways, the Concorde of today. Still impressive to look at, but beneath the surface, a lot of old wiring.

This year, the CSP turned to the Coalition for help in building a new data management platform – a platform that will allow it to improve forecasting, coordinate procurement decisions more effectively across buyers, and allow for international donors and in-country partners to work together to prevent stockouts. To advance our strategic goal of increasing the availability of RH supplies, we are investing nearly a quarter of a million dollars in the design of this tool, which will also include critical upgrades to the Reproductive Health Interchange (RHI) and Procurement Planning Monitoring Report (PPMR) so that information from these two databases can be imported into the CSP’s new forecasting tool.

This year will also see the completion of another tool that responds directly to requests from manufacturers – both generic and innovator – for timely, accurate data that can help them make more informed decisions on product registration at the country level, and ultimately make it easier to introduce new quality-assured RH products into national markets. This tool, once completed will provide manufacturers new insights into the market size and potential sales for contraceptive in developing countries, and potentially result in quicker returns on investments for manufacturers, and expansion into additional countries.

Take Stock

I said earlier on that I would not dwell on the headline grabbers – but there is one headline I would be remiss in omitting and that is the work on TakeStock – our global initiative to make stockouts a thing of the past. Tomorrow, my colleagues will share with you a campaign update, and unveil the campaign website, the hub where everything happens – where campaign news, success stories, new signatories, and advocacy efforts will be showcased. So it is not for me to steal their thunder.

For me, TakeStock exemplifies the power we possess as a partnership, not just to react to the changes and challenges around us, but to actually help us shape that landscape. We have all heard of the tale of the three blind men and an elephant – each man feeling his own part of the animal, each convinced he knows what it is.

At the risk of sounding cliché, TakeStock has given us sight; it has moved us the first time ever, to collectively define our challenge, to agree on what it is we will fight together and how we can measure success. Under Take Stock, we are witnessing organizations that absolutely have a vested interest in the status quo – in doing things the way they have always done them - put those interests aside for the common good. We cannot overcome together what we cannot see together – and the new harmonized set of stockout indicators will make that possible.

But at the end of the day, TakeStock is not about indicators; it is not about the latest iteration in our field’s growing neurosis over numbers – it is about a forging a common vision of the obstacles we must overcome and the reality we want to see. It is all about what we are and what we can do.

CHOICE AND QUALITY

Much of our work to enhance choice – another strategic pillar -- has benefitted from investments made through our Innovation Fund. Through it, we have supported partners such as FHI360, Medicines360 and MSI to assess the market prospects for a generic levonorgestrel IUD in Kenya. We are supporting efforts to ensure same-day provision of family planning which can make the difference between contraception or nothing at all. We are investing in initiatives by Pregna, Institute from Reproductive Health, and Family Care International to leverage e-commerce as a means of taking the guesswork out of both choice and quality. Again, you will hear all about these initiatives - and more - as we hear from the recipients of our Innovation Fund.

China

Under the banner of FP2020, our community has committed itself to delivering FP services to an additional 120M users by 2020. This ambitious goal will, without any doubt, boost the demand for contraception to historic levels. But ensuring that goal is met will hinge on both adequate supplies of family planning commodities, and adequate funding to make sure those who need the supplies can actually access them.

In the coming months, we will be embarking on an effort to understand better the volumes of commodities needed to meet the growing demand for FP in a world that hopes to see the ambitious metrics achieved in just 69 countries alone. These results will help the donor community allocate resources effectively. It will help manufacturers to plan production and justify new investments. It will help countries budget more accurately – and know what to expect of both donors and the private sector. And it will help us as a community to inform discussions on what is needed out of the new global architecture for development and development financing.

But I can tell you - even before we embark on this effort - that meeting the growing global demand for family planning will require more manufacturers delivering more choice of quality products to more people in more places than ever before.

As a community we cannot afford to leave on the sidelines any sector or any country that offers us hope in meeting that goal. And we have made great progress in that regard. Today, nearly 20 percent of our membership includes representatives of the commercial and manufacturing sector. And we have in place the GEMS Caucus, which since 2013, has spoken up for generic manufactures in a world where global headlines are often grabbed by the good work carried out by those headquartered in colder climes.

Last May, the Executive Committee met in Beijing where, on the first day of our meeting, we hosted a roundtable, comprising some 30 experts from government, pharma and civil society. That event really did open our eyes to the fact that despite China's tremendous potential to help meet the RH supply needs of women and men around the world, they remain very much on the sidelines. And while time barriers, language barriers, and logistics barriers haven't diminished the desire of our partners there to produce quality supplies, obtain prequalification, compete in local markets, or become a global development partners – they have made it difficult for China to translate that desire into action.

For the Executive Committee, the visit to China opened our eyes. It helped us see the many barriers partners are facing as they try to benefit from what our international community, and the Coalition in

particular, has to offer. We've seen this before in LAC and Francophone Africa, where we now have in place active regional forums communicating information and voicing their concerns, in their own language, on the global stage. For China, we can do no less – and in the months since our visit, we have acted swiftly. We published in Chinese and English the proceedings of our roundtable for all to see. We issued the first quarterly Chinese-language edition of SupplyInsider, as well as updates – also in Chinese - on the new CSP forecasts and policies on donor procurement. And very soon, under the leadership of CCSA, we hope to be facilitating more direct dialogue, in Chinese, between local partners and the international agencies whose policies and procedures China wants and needs to understand better.

In one form or another China has been engaged with the work of the Coalition since our establishment in 2004 – but once again the significance of our visit was not just about China. It was about inclusion; it was about engagement, it was about leveraging the power of partnership to bring about the transformational changes we often hear about, but often struggle to achieve.

I began my remarks by referring to the threshold we crossed last year, as we moved from our first decade into the next. In the coming year, we will also be confronting a very different kind of threshold – a financial threshold that calls for us to begin securing the resources we need to embark on what will be our next and fourth funding cycle.

What many in this room probably do not realize is that a critical component of what allows us to work and indeed thrive, is the very special relationship that exists, not just between us and our donors, but amongst our donors themselves – a relationship and a common vision that has allowed them to support what really is quite extraordinary in our field - a single core budget.

In our strategy, we often refer to our levers of change, one of the most critical being our capacity for flexibility. It was “flexibility” that allowed us to quickly focus on the GFF; to take action on China; to help build the CSP's new data management platform; and to embark on the new commodity gap analysis. And that flexibility is only possible because of the trust and common vision we share with our donors, and they with each other. It is a tremendous asset we all share and I would like everyone in this room to recognize the donors that have made that possible: Gates, DFID, Norad, UNFPA and USAID, not forgetting of course those contributors that have chosen to support specific areas and initiatives, such as the Hewlett, Macarthur, and Packard Foundations.

And so in the coming months, I look forward to working with our partners, our donors, and members of the Executive Committee to developing a core proposal that can take us through 2020. We enter this next phase probably better equipped than ever before in our history – with a new strategy, a new framework for measuring change, a new optimism for the future of family planning and RH supplies, and, I might add a new Chair - full of energy and ready to take on this next challenge in his impressive career.

And speaking of Chair, I would like to end my remarks by extending a special thank-you to Marleen Temmerman. I have often said that all the individuals who have occupied the post of Chair have each been as different as day and night. But each has been perfect for their time. Marleen took the helm of an organization, far more mature than any of her predecessors had experienced. It was financially secure; it had just emerged from a very positive evaluation; and it possessed a far clearer sense of what made it work – our levers of change.

What did change during Marleen's term was the environment in which we operate. During her term, family planning and reproductive health truly did emerge from the shadows. They, and FP in particular, became the subject of new global movement, the object of increased funding but also more and more susceptible to the changes and uncertainties associated with the post-2015 environment. Marleen, though her position at WHO, her global connections, her skills as both provider and politician, and her international stature, was a tremendous source of wisdom and guidance in helping us manage these new waters.

And so behalf of all of us I would like to wish Marleen the best of success on her new life – and not forget us as she starts writing cheques on behalf of the Aga Khan Foundation!

Looking around me at this moment, I see tremendous turnout. A turnout of familiar faces, who have supported the Coalition year in and out, since the early days. And likewise, a turnout of people who are perhaps at their first Coalition family gathering. For better or for worse, we have crossed the threshold of the first decade and are well and truly into the future, a future we have the vision and capacity to shape for ourselves and for the world's poorest, and in so doing, change the course of the supplies story, and make history. I cannot think of a better group of people to make history with than this family, so welcome, and let's get to work!