

Statement announcing the creation of the Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative

7 July 2015

The Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (the Initiative) is a new organisation which has been set up today following the launch of the Core Humanitarian Standard¹ (CHS) to promote quality and accountable support to vulnerable communities affected by crisis or at risk of crisis, through the provision of accessible, high-quality verification and certification services to NGOs worldwide.

The creation of the Initiative is grounded in **a vision of humanitarian organisations consistently progressing in the delivery of quality accountable humanitarian action**, based on a system that includes:

- the Core Humanitarian Standard which defines good practice in terms of principled, accountable and effective humanitarian action;
- a common self-assessment framework for organisations to report on how they apply the CHS;
- a voluntary third-party verification and certification mechanism to assess and validate evidence that an organisation reflects the CHS requirements in its policy, procedures, and practices

The main aim of the Initiative is to **promote quality and accountable support to vulnerable communities affected by or at risk of crisis**.

More specifically, **its purpose is to:**

- provide independent verification of practices and/or grant certification of aid providers against agreed upon standards;
- develop and administer quality and accountability verification methodologies applicable to different aid providers in different contexts;
- monitor and report on the impact of verification and certification against the CHS and other relevant standards on the quality of assistance and protection provided to populations affected by or at risk of crisis;
- promote the CHS and other humanitarian standards verification and certification schemes to encourage demand and support for the services of the Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative;

This will enable NGOs to:

- get an independent and professional review of where they stand in their application of the CHS;
- set objectives to continuously learn and improve in their delivery of quality and accountable humanitarian action;
- show transparency and communicate on where they stand in terms of meeting their commitments to quality and accountability;
- demonstrate that they are giving affected populations the means to hold them accountable for their action.

¹ <http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/the-standard>

The Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative is to be headquartered in Geneva, so as to be in close proximity to the newly created CHS Alliance², which is responsible for managing the Core Humanitarian Standard and its verification framework. It is essential that both organisations develop a close working relation from the onset.

The Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative has been constituted as an independent, non-profit organisation under Swiss law. Its Articles of Association state that the General Assembly, which is its supreme power, is composed of up to 25 Members, thus giving space to different stakeholders, including representatives of affected people, to join in the organisation's governance. Members appoint between five and 10 Board Directors, who are responsible for the Initiative and support the Secretariat's Executive Director in realising its objects.

The Founding Members and Board Directors are the following:

- **President:** Professor Jacques Forster, Former Chairman of the Graduate Institute's Foundation Board and ex-member of the Assembly of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) until 2010 as well as its Vice President from 1999 until 2007 – *based in Switzerland*
- **Vice President:** Dr Sue-Anne Wallace, Chair of Code of Conduct Committee, Australian Council for International Development – *based in Australia*
- **Treasurer:** Mr Gerrit Marais, Global Accreditation Manager, Forestry and Forest Products, SGS Systems and Services Certification, Woodmead, South Africa – *based in South Africa*
- Ms Judith Greenwood, in-coming Executive Director of the CHS Alliance – *based in Switzerland*
- Ms Kate Half, Executive Secretary, SCHR – *based in Switzerland*
- Ms Sawako Matsuo, Secretary General, Quality & Accountability Network (J-QAN) and Manager of the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC) – *based in Japan*
- Ms Jyotsna (Jo) Puri, 3ie Deputy Director and Head of Evaluation, Previously Associate Research Scientist at Columbia University and adjunct faculty at the School of International and Public Affairs – *based in India*
- Mr Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop, Executive Director, HERE-Geneva – *based in Switzerland*

External financing is being sought to set the Initiative up and give it the means to start operations and demonstrate the value of its services to NGOs. The Initiative's business plan **aims at self-sustainability by 2021**, with 200 organisations using its services.

In addition, a fund is being set up, under the administration of the CHS Alliance, **to subsidise the costs of verification and certification for smaller organisations** who want to access these services, but may not have the resources to afford their full costs.

A total of 1.3 Million CHF has been budgeted for the Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative's operations until the end of 2017, while 200,000 CHF are required to start up the subsidy Fund.

For any further information please contact Pr. Jacques Forster, the Initiative's President at jacquesforster@net2000.ch, or Kate Half, Founding Member, at schr@ifrc.org / +41 79 551 8257.

² <http://www.chsalliance.org/>