

**Annual Meeting of the General Assembly
of the Geneva Social Observatory
220 Route de Ferney, Le Grand Saconnex, Switzerland
Wednesday, 1 June 2011 and continued to Wednesday, 13 July 2011**

Annual Report of the Executive Director
July 2010 to July 2011

During its seventh year, the activities of the Geneva Social Observatory (GSO) entered a reflective phase focused on moving beyond the lessons learned from the implementation of the Workplace Strategy on Diabetes and Wellness in Poland, Turkey and the Russian Federation and the brainstorming roundtable held in Geneva in May 2011. This led to an evolutionary cycle of proposal development and roundtables oriented to the High-Level Meeting on Noncommunicable Diseases at the UN General Assembly in September 2011.

Meanwhile, the GSO Management Committee has been looking at the long-term benefit of the core mission of the GSO in facilitating a neutral space for multi-stakeholder dialogue on contentious social issues. It was agreed to rename the GSO to be the “Global” Social Observatory, which was completed with an extraordinary session of the General Assembly in November 2011. The Committee was also called upon to rewrite the basic mission statement, which was completed in February 2011. Finally, this report provides updates on changes in the GSO leadership.

The GSO Proposals on Diabetes and Wellness

By way of background, the GSO prepared a ***Workplace Strategy on Diabetes and Wellness*** through extensive multi-stakeholder consultations culminating in a validation forum on 25 September 2008. Following the September 2009 Forum, an unrestricted grant was provided by Merck/MSD for workshops and/or seminars in Poland, Russia and Turkey. These were carried out in June 2009 (Poland and Turkey) and September 2009 (Russia), with a participatory process that resulted in recommendations for further action.

Subsequently, on 6 May 2010, the GSO convened a consultative roundtable in Geneva to review the recommendations from the three countries with experts from the WHO, NGOs, diplomatic missions and the private sector. The roundtable participants made further recommendations. As a result, follow-up proposals were prepared for the three countries, and a template for implementation of the Workplace Strategy in other countries was updated to incorporate these recommendations. Merck/MSD ceased to be a funding source, and the GSO submitted applications to several other pharmaceutical and health technology companies through the course of the second half of 2010, to no avail. The GSO also submitted applications for Turkey and the Russian Federation with the BRIDGES programme at the International Diabetes Federation. The

applications cleared the first phase of the review process but were ultimately not funded when the final review was completed by May 2011.

The GSO Roundtables on Mobilizing Multistakeholder Action to Address NCDs

The evolutionary cycle of proposal development started at the end of 2010 and early 2011 with proposals to several prospective funders for a broader series of roundtables on the four noncommunicable diseases that were being addressed in the forthcoming High-Level Meeting on NCDs in New York in September 2011. This was ultimately fruitful, with funding pledged by Medtronic, Pfizer and Sanofi-Aventis for a roundtable on ***Mobilizing Multi-Stakeholder Action to Address Non-Communicable Diseases*** in Geneva on 8 April 2011. The outcome from that roundtable was shared with others at a WHO Global Health Forum for NGOs and the private sector in Moscow on 27 April, which the GSO Executive Director attended. With additional funding, the GSO also held a second roundtable on the same subject, this time in cooperation with the Council for Multilateral Business Diplomacy, in Geneva on 1 June 2011. Finally, the Executive Director attended the informal consultation with NGOs and the private sector held under the auspices of the President of the UN General Assembly in New York on 21 June 2011. GSO reports have been prepared and distributed for the 8 April and 1 June roundtables, and the Moscow Global Health Forum, while a consolidated statement of priorities for action was prepared and distributed at the 21 June event. The GSO also continues to participate in the Common Interest Group of the NCD Alliance. Finally, additional proposals are being developed for further roundtables or panels in August and September 2011.

Name Change and Management Committee Reflections

At the 2010 General Assembly it was agreed to change the name of the GSO to “Global” Social Observatory. This was further discussed at an extraordinary session of the General Assembly in November and accepted with some reservations. The Management Committee was also called upon to review and revise the basic mission statement for the GSO. This was realized in February 2011, with the following new statement:

The mission of the GSO is to facilitate dialogue and disseminate information on social issues in order to encourage stakeholders to engage in a broadened search for solutions and policy coherence. This service is based on a participatory process that brings all interested parties together in a neutral space to identify solutions and policies that are coherent. These solutions can then contribute to policy-making at the governmental and intergovernmental levels.

Changes at GSO

The Geneva Social Observatory has been fortunate to have a wide array of supporters who have contributed their time and resources to GSO programmes. The most substantial contribution of time has come from HRI, and efforts have been made to cover the costs incurred by HRI, at least in terms of specific project outputs. In addition, members of the GSO Management Committee have been actively involved in specific endeavours for the GSO, including their expertise on budgeting, auditing, or otherwise managing the GSO accounts.

We note with appreciation the service of Deborah Vorhies as President of the Association. We regret to announce the resignation of Manzoor Ahmad who had joined us upon his retirement from the FAO but made a later decision to return to his home country of Pakistan. We are pleased that Peter Ajuzie has accepted our invitation to join the Committee, and his membership is to be confirmed at the 2011 General Assembly, for a four-year term from 2011 to 2015.