**Minutes of meeting of Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy (GPZL) Leadership Team**

**Held by Zoom starting at 14:30 hours CET on 14 December 2023**

**Attendees:**

*Leadership Team (LT) Invited but unable to attend*

Takahiro Nanri (Acting Chair) – Sasakawa Health Foundation Bill Simmons

Linda Hummel – LRI Faustino Pinto

Vivek Lal – WHO Global Leprosy Programme P. Narasimha Rao

Benedict Quao – representing program managers Lucrécia Vasquez Acevedo

Sunil Modali – Novartis Berta Mendiguren

Mauricio Nobre – representing program managers Emmy van der Grinten

Jordan Tappero – representing global health Deanna Hagge

Amar Timalsina – representing people’s organizations Beatriz Miranda

Geoff Warne – ILEP

*Support*

Monty Mukhier

Spanish interpreter

1. **Introduction**

After a delay caused by technology-related issues, Geoff Warne welcomed everyone on behalf of the Chair, who joined the meeting shortly afterwards.

1. **Minutes of previous meetings**

The minutes of the in-person meeting held in Delhi during 7-9 October 2023 were approved.

1. **Report against Milestones July-September 2023**

The report was noted without additional comment. The final Milestones report for July-December 2023, along with the financial report, will be issued in mid-January.

1. **GPZL strategy 2024-2026**

Geoff Warne introduced the final draft strategy on behalf of the Steering Committee. Since the ‘big picture’ aspects had been agreed at the meeting in Delhi, he said that this document adds the detailed activities and deliverables. He explained that the aim had been to craft a strategy that was both pragmatic and aspirational. LT members found the strategy clear and well-presented, especially the deliverables. The Leadership Team approved the strategy subject to the following changes:

1. Replace ‘by 2026’ with ‘by 2025’ for the WHA resolution.
2. Where feasible, replace ‘zero transmission’ with ‘interruption of transmission’ for consistency with the WHO Leprosy Elimination Framework.
3. Use the term ‘selected countries’ for the strategy and ‘target countries’ for the business plan.
4. **GPZL business plan 2024**

Geoff Warne introduced the proposed business plan on behalf of the Steering Committee. He explained that the business plan is derived from the three-year strategy and consists of those activities that GPZL could reasonably expect to accomplish in the first year. There was discussion about the implications for the business plan of the arrival of an Executive Director in mid-year. The Steering Committee had considered the same issue and had made a separate draft distinguishing between activities to be completed in the first and in the second half-year. The first half-year will focus on activities that do not involve major advocacy initiatives, or that are preparatory to such initiatives. It was suggested that final decisions on target countries to work in for 2024 could be deferred until the Executive Director’s arrival.

With these comments, the Leadership Team approved the 2024 Business Plan.

1. **GPZL budget 2024**

Geoff Warne introduced the proposed budget, which came with the recommendation of the three donors, who intend to share the cost in equal thirds. There was discussion on the following points:

1. The adequacy of the amount budgeted to support subnational mapping. It was confirmed that the budgeted amount was intended to support the advocacy and resource mobilization actions in the business plan, and also to allow a small direct financial contribution by GPZL.
2. There is budget for only one in-person meeting per year. The explanation was that at a cost of $50,000 per meeting, there is not the financial appetite to have more in-person meetings. The LT accepted the current position of having one in-person meeting per year, typically of three days, which in 2024 would be scheduled after the arrival of the Executive Director.
3. The need for funding for Executive Director recruitment, whether for a search company or for advertising and similar costs. It was agreed that an amount should be committed for this.
4. The fact that the budget is around one-third of what it was in 2022. It was pointed out in discussion that this reflects the fact that the donors are unwilling to continue to fund a large Secretariat, and also the fact that the incoming Executive Director is expected to help GPZL raise funds for its activities.

The Leadership Team referred the budget back to the donors for a decision on whether (a) the budget should be increased to allow for recruitment costs, or (b) the donors should hold contingency funds, enabling the recruitment costs to proceed and creating a path towards increasing the budget mid-year if necessary.

1. **Recruitment process, position description and person profile for Executive Director**

The Leadership Team approved the proposed recruitment process, but advised the Steering Committee to ensure that the multi-level process does not slow down decision-making. Ideally, the LT would like to see an ED in place before midyear and expects to see recruitment action starting promptly in January.

The Leadership Team also approved the proposed position description and person profile, subject to additional wording saying that GPZL particularly encourages interest from potential applicants in low- and middle-income countries.

1. **GPZL Charter**

The Leadership Team approved the proposed revised Charter, noting that most of the changes are to put into effect the decisions made at the October LT meeting.

1. **Pillar groups**

The Leadership Team approved the proposed terms of reference of the three Pillar Groups, noting that the Pillar Group chairs had provided input on the contents.

Mauricio Nobre, as co-chair of the Country Partnerships group, expressed concern about the workload as set out in the business plan and said that larger numbers of people would be needed so that specialised subgroups could be established to deal with specific issues of limited time duration. It was agreed that the Leadership Team, Steering Committee and Secretariat will all need to work closely with the Pillar Group to ensure that the numbers of people needed are recruited and that the Pillar Group has a clear focus on its priorities.

1. **Appointments**

The Leadership Team:

1. Agreed final, one-year extensions to the terms of Benedict Quao and Mauricio Nobre on the LT. Their LT service will now end in the first quarter of 2025.
2. Noted the report and recommendations of the Chair Assessment Panel, and agreed to invite Peter Steinmann to an interview with as many LT members as are available, after which a decision will be made either to appoint him or to continue the search.
3. Appointed Dr Tuduetso Molefi, national program manager in Botswana, to the LT, filling one of the vacancies for national program manager (NPM) representatives. LT members noted with approval her enthusiasm for GPZL, her dynamism within the Botswana program and her connectedness through her role as co-chair of Kikundi, the community of practice for NPMs in the WHO Africa region.
4. Appointed Faustino Pinto to the Steering Committee as representative of organizations of persons affected by leprosy, after listening to a recorded speech by Faustino.
5. Appointed Amar Timalsina to the Executive Director Search Committee as representative of organizations of persons affected by leprosy.

The Leadership Team noted that Steering Committee members are liaising with Dr Sudarshan Mandal in an effort to gain active participation on the LT by an NPM representative from India. The Leadership Team specified that the next recruitment of NPMs, to replace those retiring in the first quarter of 2025, should be through an open call for applications.

1. **Next virtual meeting**

No date was set, but it was anticipated that the next meeting would be in February 2024.

The meeting closed at 16:45 CET with appreciation to all participants.