

## Minutes of the meeting of the DRC Board of Directors on 7 February 2024

### Present

#### From the Board of Directors:

Agi Csonka, Chairperson  
 Bettina Bach (online attendance)  
 Henrik Bodskov  
 Juliane Marie Neiiendam  
 Kim Simonsen  
 Mette Fejfer  
 Mustafa Rafiqyaar, Employee representative  
 Nina Boel  
 Torben Huss  
 Ulla Næsby Tawiah  
 Vagn Berthelsen  
 Signe Husted Davidsen, Observer (Chairperson  
 of DFUNK)

#### From the Secretariat:

Charlotte Slente, Secretary General  
 Vibeke Bach Madsen, Board Secretary  
 Kasper Orloff, CFO, attended for agenda item 2  
 Yann Faivre, Executive Director West Africa, North  
 Africa and Latin America, attended for agenda item  
 3  
 James Curtis, Executive Director East Africa and Great  
 Lakes, attended for agenda item 3  
 Lilu Thapa, Executive Director Middle East, attended  
 for agenda items 3, 4  
 Gerry Garvey, Executive Director Asia/Europe,  
 attended for agenda item 3

### Agenda

	Items		Contents
1)	<b>Approval of agenda</b>	Decision	Comments on the agenda
2)	<b>Financial briefing</b> / Kasper Orloff, CFO	Briefing	Annex 2.0 Cover note for Financial briefing Annex 2.1 Follow-up on the January-November 2023 budget Follow-up on the January-November 2023 budget and preliminary forecasts for 2023.
3)	<b>THEME</b> <b>Presentation of the DRC regions</b> / Executive Directors of regions: - Yann Faivre, West Africa, North Africa and Latin America - James Curtis, East Africa and Great Lakes - Lilu Thapa, Middle East - Gerry Garvey, Asia/Europe	Briefing	As the Executive Directors of the regions are in Copenhagen, we will take the opportunity to brief the Board of Directors on the activities of the DRC's four regions: current situation, strategic focus and main activities. Board members are advised to read <i>Update            from regions and HQ departments</i> which was sent to the Board members by email on 26 January 2024.
4)	<b>The Gaza Conflict: Re-registration            and response</b> / Charlotte Slente, Secretary General, and Lilu Thapa, Executive Director Middle East	Decision	Annex 4.0 Cover note for Gaza Conflict Response Annex 4.1 Recommendation for Gaza Conflict Response Annex 4.2 Gaza Conflict Response Scoping Report

	Items		Contents
			Annex 4.3 Risk assessment of Gaza Conflict Response Request for approval of re-registration and operation in the occupied Palestinian territory and response to immediate and long-term humanitarian needs.
5)	<b>New Chairperson</b> / Agi Csonka	Decision	Annex 5.0 Cover note for New Chairperson Annex 5.1 Committee nomination of new Chairperson Annex 5.2 Candidate report The Board of Directors will be introduced to the candidate nominated by the committee for the position as Chairperson.
6)	<b>Draft agenda for the annual meeting of the Council on 29 May 2024</b> / Agi Csonka	Decision	Annex 6.0 Cover note for the annual meeting of the Council Annex 6.1 Draft agenda for the annual meeting of the Council on 29 May 2024 The Board of Directors is to approve the draft agenda which will be sent to the member organisations together with the notice convening the meeting no later than two months prior to the meeting.
7)	<b>Announcements from the Chairperson and the Secretary General</b>	Briefing	
8)	<b>Any other business</b>		
	<b>Recap after the meeting</b>		The Board's 'free time' with the possibility to evaluate and recap the meeting.

## Re 1) Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved as presented above.

It was decided to postpone the item *Recap of Board of Directors' seminar on 9-10 November 2023: Member organisations* until a future Board meeting, that is, after the annual meeting of the Council on 29 May 2024.

## Re 2) Financial briefing

The following annexes had been sent to the Board members:

Annex 2.0 *Cover note for Financial briefing*

Annex 2.1 *Follow-up on the January-November 2023 budget*

Kasper Orloff, CFO, followed up briefly on the January-November 2023 budget. Unfortunately, it was not possible to present the financial results for the year as the bookkeeping for December had not yet been completed.

**January-November** – Revenue is slightly below budget and operating costs/consumption have been similarly lower.

The *financial results* remain in positive territory and above budget.

The *liquidity* continues to be high.

Throughout 2023, a clean-up project has been conducted involving old projects dating back to 2019 and implementation of the DRC's ERP system (DRC Dynamics), which will have an impact on this year's results. Overall, the aim is still to obtain slightly positive results.

⇒ **Recap:** The Board of Directors expressed its thanks for the briefing and considered the clean-up to be reassuring. The Board looked forward to receiving the final figures for 2023, hoping to see positive results.

### **Re 3) THEME: Presentation of the DRC regions**

DRC Executive Directors of regions Yann Faivre (West Africa, North Africa, Latin America), James Curtis (East Africa and Great Lakes), Lilu Thapa (Middle East) and Gerry Garvey (Europe (and Asia as from May 2023)) briefed the Board on the activities of the regions: current situation, strategic focus and main activities.

It would take a great deal of effort to summarise the presentations. Reference is made to the DRC's website where the regions and countries are introduced: [Where we work | DRC Danish Refugee Council](#)

⇒ **Recap:** The Board of Directors thanked for an interesting briefing which provided a good overview of the DRC's commitment and key activities across the world.

### **Re 4) The Gaza Conflict: Re-registration and response**

The following annexes had been sent to the Board members:

Annex 4.0 Cover note for Gaza Conflict Response

Annex 4.1 Recommendation for Gaza Conflict Response

Annex 4.2 Gaza Conflict Response Scoping Report

Annex 4.3 Risk assessment of Gaza Conflict Response

Charlotte Slente, Secretary General, and Lilu Thapa, Executive Director Middle East, opened this agenda item, which included a recommendation to approve the re-registration and operational response in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and Israel and information about the DRC's possible response in Gaza.

The DRC does not currently have an active presence in the oPt (the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem), nor in Israel. However, the DRC was registered with the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli authorities in 2011 and maintained a presence until 2014. With the intensification of the Syrian crisis and the reduced funding opportunities in the oPt, the DRC's focus shifted from the Palestinian cause to a crisis response in Syria.

The DRC's registration with the Israeli and Palestinian authorities has now expired as the DRC has not maintained an active presence and has not met the requirement of submitting an annual statement of its activities in the oPt. Based on information received from the Jerusalem-based law firm that processed the DRC's initial registration in 2011, it is not possible to reactivate the DRC's registration; a new registration process is required. The documents required include a formal approval from the DRC's top management to operate in the oPt.

A so-called *Scoping Report* has been prepared providing an assessment of the operational needs in Gaza and on the West Bank, an overview of the funding opportunities, a screening of the potential implementation methods, an assessment of the registration/re-registration opportunities and a presentation of the opportunities investigated.

Based on the Scoping Report findings (Annex 4.1), the following actions are proposed:

- 1) Immediate (and underway): Deliver *Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE)* and *Conflict Preparedness and Prevention (CPP)* in an emergency context immediately, plan for *Battle Area Clearance (BAC)* when a ceasefire takes place and humanitarian response inside Gaza can be scaled up.
- 2) Intermediate: Invest in expanded scoping exercise to explore operational, programmatic, and strategic potentials to operate beyond Humanitarian Mine Action in Gaza, the West Bank, and/or East Jerusalem.

⇒ **Decisions:** *The Board of Directors agreed that it was imperative for the DRC to have a presence in the oPt and to contribute to solutions as soon as possible.*

*Accordingly, the Board of Directors approved the recommendation to re-register the DRC in the oPt.*

## Re 5) New Chairperson

The following annexes for this agenda item had been sent to the Board members:

Annex 5.0 *Cover note for New Chairperson*

Annex 5.1 *Committee nomination of new Chairperson*

Annex 5.2 *Candidate report*

Agi Csonka has announced that having held the position as Chairperson of the DRC for six years, she has decided not to stand for re-election for a third term. The motivation for her decision is that given the development that the DRC has gone through in recent years, the organisation now needs a Chairperson with a strong international profile. As a result, the Board of Directors launched a process in the autumn of 2023 to find a suitable candidate.

At the Board of Directors' seminar in November 2023, a committee consisting of Agi Csonka, Kim Simonsen, Vagn Berthelsen and Charlotte Slente was set up and tasked with identifying a strong Chairperson candidate who matched the agreed competency profile and whom the Board of Directors could present to the Council for approval.

### Profile

Together with the Chairpersonship and the Secretary General, Korn Ferry, an executive search firm, drafted a competency profile for the new Chairperson of the DRC.

In addition to strong management skills and experience from directorships at major businesses and/or organisations as well as an ability to act as a sounding board for the Secretary General, priority has been given, in particular, to

- International experience, visions and network
- Capacity to take up the job as Chairperson of a very complex organisation operating in an extremely risky field
- An understanding of how the DRC is organised: an umbrella organisation for member organisations from the Danish organisational and civil society

### Candidates

Korn Ferry, the Chairpersonship and the Board of Directors have proposed candidates who have been screened by Korn Ferry and presented to the committee.

Initially, the list for consideration and screening comprised 39 candidates: 21 female and 18 male candidates.

In connection with the screening, quite a few candidates informed Korn Ferry that they were either engaged in activities elsewhere or were fully booked.

The committee has met with three (one female and two male) candidates and will propose one candidate for the approval of the Board of Directors and to be recommended to the Council.

The candidate attended for this agenda item, and time was allowed for questions and a dialogue.

⇒ **Decisions:** *The Board of Directors considered the candidate to be very qualified for the role as new Chairperson of the DRC.*

*With this candidate, the DRC will have a Chairperson with strong international experience and visions, a good understanding of the collaboration with different types of stakeholders and who is expected to be able to make key contributions to the continued development of the DRC, including a grasp of the complex and risky environment in which the DRC operates.*

*Therefore, the Board of Directors will propose to the Council that the candidate be elected as new Chairperson of the DRC.*

*At the beginning of March, the notice convening the annual meeting of the Council on 29 May 2024 will be sent to the Council members together with a presentation of the candidate nominated as new Chairperson of the DRC.*

## **Re 6) Draft agenda for the annual meeting of the Council on 29 May 2024**

The following annexes for this agenda item had been sent to the Board members:

Annex 5.0 *Cover note for the annual meeting of the Council*

Annex 5.1 *Draft agenda for the annual meeting of the Council on 29 May 2024*

The draft agenda will be sent to the Council members together with the notice convening the meeting no later than two months before the annual meeting.

### **Election**

The following elections will take place at the 2024 annual meeting of the Council

- Chairperson
- Three members of the Board of Directors  
It will be proposed to the Council to adopt a transition plan as regards Article 12(2) of the Statutes on the number of re-election terms/years that members may serve on the Board of Directors.  
Specifically, this means that the current Board members will be allowed to serve on the Board of Directors for up to nine years, which is in line with the current Statutes.  
It also means that the Board members comprised by the transition plan will be eligible for re-election three times as opposed to two times as set out in the current Statutes.  
Provided the transition plan is adopted, Bettina Bach, Juliane Neiiendam and Kim Simonsen will be given the possibility to seek re-election.
- State-authorized public accountant(s)
- Two Audit Committee members

### **Introductory theme at the meeting**

True to tradition, the annual meeting of the Council will be kicked off with a theme and one or two speakers presenting a subject of relevance to the DRC and the member organisations.

In recent years, there has been a presentation of the DRC's work at the meeting. In 2023, the theme was humanitarian access to Afghanistan. In 2022, the theme was the DRC's response in Ukraine which was introduced by Charlotte Slente, Secretary General, and Kenneth Flex, Director of DRC Integration.

A proposal was made for an introduction of the DRC's work with localisation – ambitions and specific examples.

### **Proposed amendment of Article 17 of the Statutes on Annual Report and Audit**

In connection with the Audit Committee's approval of the updated strategy and policy for the internal audit (approved by the Audit Committee in September 2023), a specification of Article 17(6) of the Statutes on the DRC's audit procedures is required. In particular, the role of the Secretariat in the audit work and the involvement of internal and external auditors in the audit work needs to be specified.

### **General discussion: Collaboration between the DRC and the Council**

Over the past year, the Board of Directors has discussed how the Board of Directors and the Secretariat could support the interaction between the Council and the member organisations.

Accordingly, the following measures are in the pipeline:

- 1) An overview of the DRC's media efforts is sent to members of the Council.
- 2) The member organisations and members of the Council are invited to relevant meetings and events (assessed on an ongoing basis)
- 3) Thematic events are to be held for members of the Council (preferably a thematic meeting in the autumn – like the one held in connection with the extraordinary meeting of the Council in October)

A round-table discussion with five members of the Council (various types of organisations) in connection with the extraordinary meeting of the Council in October 2023 indicated great satisfaction with the DRC membership, which was perceived to be relevant and important.

It was proposed to allocate time at the annual meeting of the Council for group discussions about the collaboration between the Council and the DRC / Board of Directors.

⇒ **Decisions:** *The Board of Directors approved the draft agenda, including the proposal to allocate time for group discussions about the collaboration between the Council and the DRC.*

*As regards the introductory theme, the Board of Directors supported the proposed presentation of the DRC's work with localisation – ambitions and specific examples.*

## **Re 7) Announcements from the Chairperson and the Secretary General**

- **DFUNK**

DFUNK is facing financial difficulties as the Danish Youth Council (DUF) has made a final refusal to grant subsidies for 2024. The reason for the refusal is a lack of approval of DFUNK as a youth organisation with nationwide activities.

DFUNK had allowed for the subsidy in its budget. DFUNK does not expect to receive any subsidies until end-2025 (based on 2024 activity data) at the earliest.

DFUNK is currently considering whether (and how) its key and unique activities can be maintained and has received positive feedback from specific donors.

The DRC will offer support and participation where relevant.

- **2-year anniversary of Ukraine invasion marked on 23 February at the Danish Chamber of Commerce**

The event was held in collaboration with the DRC, PlanBornefonden and Save the Children Denmark.

Focus was on the huge consequences of the war illustrated through dialogue, photos and music.

Among the speakers were **Charlotte Slente**, Secretary General of the DRC; Åse Andersson, Communications Director at Jysk; Anders Ladekarl, Secretary General of the Danish Red Cross; and Johanne Schmidt-Nielsen, Secretary General of Save the Children Denmark.

Two years of human casualties, immense humanitarian needs, people fleeing and massive destruction. The vast consequences of the war extend far into the future and far beyond the borders of Ukraine.

Since the outbreak of the war, Danish and international businesses, organisations in the civil society, foundations and the population have shown great commitment to support the humanitarian response in Ukraine and the neighbouring countries, including the reception of Ukrainian refugees in Denmark.

The Board of Directors had been invited for the event.

- **Accusation against former employee of DRC Integration**

An accusation has been made against a former employee of DRC Integration. The relevant person has allegedly scared a father into leaving Denmark with his four children living at home and witnessed physical and psychological violence against the children without reporting it to the local authority.

The matter has been brought up by Danish daily BT and has led to questions being asked in the Danish Parliament, Folketinget, under section 20 of the Parliament's rules of procedure, and an inquiry has been received from the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration, SIRI.

The DRC has issued a response to SIRI and the Immigration and Integration Committee of the Danish Parliament and has published a press release in which the main point was that if this has in fact taken place, it is unacceptable and does in no way agree with the DRC's values, rules and guidelines for employee code of conduct.

The Minister/SIRI has been informed that, in view of the matter, DRC Integration will carefully review its quality assurance procedures to assess where and how they can be moderated, if necessary.

## **Re 8) Any other business**

No further business was transacted under this item.

### **Board meetings in 2024**

Board/2 7 May 3.00-6.30 pm

Board/3 29 May 3.45-4.45 pm

Board/4 26 June 3.00-6.30 pm

Board/5 11 September 3.00-6.30 pm

Board/6 Seminar from 14 November at 6.00 pm to 15 November at 5.00 pm

Board/7 9 December 3.00-6.30 pm