



CORDS

Connecting Organizations for Regional
Disease Surveillance

Strategic Plan

Approved April 22, 2011

Table of Contents

Demonstrated Value of Multi-Country Disease Surveillance Networks.....	2
The Unique Opportunity: Strengthening Disease Surveillance Through CORDS.....	3
The Vision.....	4
The Mission	4
The Strategic Objectives.....	5
CORDS Activities.....	5
Improving Capacity.....	5
Advancing One Health.....	6
Promoting Innovation	6
Building Sustainable Networks.....	7
CORDS Partnerships	8
Operations: Program Management and Oversight.....	8
Measuring the Impact of CORDS.....	8
Resource Mobilization for a Sustainable CORDS.....	8
Chart of CORDS Infectious Disease Surveillance Networks.....	Appendix A
Timeline for CORDS Activities.....	Appendix B
CORDS Bylaws	Appendix C

Demonstrated Value of Multi-Country Disease Surveillance Networks

Multi-country disease surveillance networks around the world are improving efforts to detect, investigate, and respond to disease outbreaks and epidemics. Participating countries within networks develop partnerships with each other in order to share disease outbreak information and to collaborate in efforts to control disease spread. Sharing such information within a network contributes to a more complete understanding of scientific evidence about the nature of the outbreak and measures that are likely to lead to control. This peer-to-peer collaboration across national borders within a network's geographic region not only increases efficiencies in surveillance, but it also provides regular opportunities for the sharing of technical methods, tools, and other resources that can enhance the disease surveillance practices of all countries within a network.

Multi-country disease surveillance networks now exist in many parts of the world, such as the Middle East, South East Asia, Southern Africa, Southeastern Europe, and East Africa. Experience has shown that as a network matures and professionals across borders routinely work together on joint surveillance goals, the sharing of data, tools, and innovative ideas and approaches increases substantially. This cross-fertilization between peers in a region benefits all members of the network. It lays the foundation for coordinated regional disease surveillance and response, and it lifts the practice and technical know-how of the least developed countries in the network.

There are many concrete and diverse examples of successful outcomes produced by multi-country disease surveillance networks. A few are outlined below.

- The Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance network (MBDS), comprised of Cambodia, Southern China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam, has directed a number of coordinated efforts to investigate disease outbreaks, such as H5N1, cholera, and Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever, and to develop joint strategies for containing disease in the region. It has also led post disaster relief efforts, including during the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar in May 2008. A Rapid Response team made up of MBDS Thailand representatives participated in a 32-member medical team that assisted refugees in the Myuangmya region. The team was concerned about outbreaks of infectious respiratory diseases that, without immediate intervention, could spread to neighboring regions. This successful post disaster relief effort was possible due to the existing relationships and collaborative procedures formed through the MBDS network.
- The Middle East Consortium on Infectious Disease Surveillance (MECIDS) is a disease surveillance network made up of public health experts and ministry of health officials from Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and Jordan. This group has had success in finding common ground across borders in conflict and has acted together to meet disease threats. In 2009, MECIDS coordinated the joint screening, laboratory testing, and risk communication strategies to detect and control the 2009 H1N1 influenza. MECIDS has also improved capacity for regional disease surveillance of food borne disease by providing training, developing standard procedures, and establishing a common platform for sharing data and analyzing findings.
- The Southern African Centre for Disease Surveillance (SACIDS), which includes disease experts from Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Africa, works to improve the capacity of African institutions to detect, identify, and

monitor infectious diseases affecting humans and animals, including new infectious diseases of animal origin. The network has partnered with a number of institutions, including Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), the Royal Veterinary College, and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, to create an interdisciplinary network that embodies the One Health approach for collaboration between human and animal health sectors. The network has created partnerships both within the network and between the network and industrialized countries in order to support education, share knowledge, and leverage network resources such as equipment, diagnostics, and biosafety laboratories.

- The East African Integrated Disease Surveillance Network (EAIDSNet) is a regional, inter-governmental collaborative initiative of the national ministries responsible for human and animal health as well as the national health research and academic institutions of the five East African Community Partner States, namely the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Rwanda, the Republic of Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania. The main objectives of EAIDSNet are to: (1) enhance and strengthen cross-country and cross-institutional collaboration through regional coordination of activities for the prevention and control of both human and animal diseases under the One Health Initiative; (2) promote exchange and dissemination of appropriate information; (3) harmonize integrated disease surveillance systems in the region; (4) strengthen capacity for implementing integrated disease surveillance and control activities; and (5) ensure continuous exchange of expertise and best practices for integrated disease surveillance and response.

The Unique Opportunity: Strengthening Disease Surveillance Through CORDS

Networks from different regions of the world have a shared incentive to improve disease surveillance—that is, the early detection of infectious diseases, investigation of outbreaks, and the response to epidemics.¹ Building on many years of experience and successes with establishing and managing multi-country disease surveillance networks, representatives from six existing networks came together in a global alliance called Connecting Organizations for Regional Disease Surveillance (CORDS). The networks that were instrumental in founding CORDS are:

- East African Integrated Disease Surveillance Network (EAIDSNet)
- Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance Network (MBDS)
- Middle East Consortium on Infectious Disease Surveillance (MECIDS)
- Southern African Centre for Infectious Disease Surveillance (SACIDS)
- South Eastern European Health Network (SEEHN)
- Asian Partnership on Emerging Infectious Disease Research (APEIR)

Appendix A lists the country members of each CORDS founding member network. CORDS is responding to the pressing need—and opportunity—to strengthen the overall capacities and capabilities of networks, and their respective member countries, by providing a central forum for global exchanges of best practices, surveillance tools and strategies, training courses, innovations, successful operating procedures, and, where appropriate, case studies and other technical data. CORDS will serve to amplify

¹ For purposes of this Strategic Plan, the term “surveillance” includes detection, investigation, and response.

the benefits derived within individual networks to speed the development and capabilities of all CORDS network members. Strong regional networks will, over time, improve national capacities relevant to compliance with the revised International Health Regulations (IHR).

There is currently no other international organization of disease surveillance networks organized to facilitate regular information exchanges between disease surveillance practitioners in different regions of the world. CORDS works to further support the mission of the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Animal Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and other Cooperating Partners, by supporting capacity-building activities, such as peer mentoring and training that aim to improve global health security and achieve IHR compliance. CORDS can alleviate the strain on international assistance organizations by encouraging countries to develop operational epidemic response partnerships with other countries in their network or across networks. Members are enabled through CORDS to seek technical and resource collaborations from experts in other CORDS networks and/or Cooperating Partners or other technical experts. CORDS also provides a novel platform for the development and testing of innovative disease surveillance technologies and approaches, with the goal of advancing the practice of infectious disease surveillance. The makeup of CORDS is distinct. CORDS convenes a multidisciplinary group of network leaders to work with key Cooperating Partners devoted to a range of relevant issues across the spectrum of human/- animal/environmental/ecological health.

CORDS is committed to a culture that encourages the secure and timely sharing of information and best practices between disease surveillance experts from across CORDS networks. CORDS fosters the development of professional collaborations and partnerships between its members and will provide regular opportunities for joint learning and technical exchanges, with the goal of developing a global “community of practice” that can be of high value for the disease surveillance professionals involved in the CORDS networks. Multi-country disease surveillance networks are successful only when the individual experts from across the region develop trust-based relationships that support the comfortable exchange of views and data. Thus, all of CORDS activities are organized around this central principle.

The Vision

“A World United Against Infectious Diseases”

The Mission

The mission of CORDS is to link regional disease surveillance networks to improve global capacity to respond to infectious diseases.

The Strategic Objectives

CORDS focuses on four strategic objectives:

1. **Improving Capacity:** CORDS facilitates the sharing between networks of case studies, technical expertise, data, best practices, and resources to help networks and their member countries develop new skills and build operational partnerships across regions.
2. **Advancing One Health:** CORDS seeks to modernize disease surveillance by improving coordination between animal, human, and environmental sectors at national, regional, and international levels.
3. **Promoting Innovation:** CORDS serves as a venue for networks to share their innovative ideas and approaches to disease surveillance, and it also provides an organized platform for co-development of new technologies and innovations within and across regions.
4. **Building Sustainable Networks:** CORDS works to strengthen multi-country disease surveillance networks and facilitate the creation of sustainable new networks in areas of high disease risk by providing educational materials, success stories, progress reports, and other information to networks that they can use with their respective ministries to demonstrate the value of multi-country networks.

CORDS Activities

CORDS has hosted and will continue to host a number of programmatic activities across the networks. The future priority activities of CORDS will support the four stated strategic objectives:

Improving Capacity

CORDS will work to strengthen capacity of its member networks by facilitating:

Knowledge Generation, Management, and Sharing

- Peer-to-peer mentoring
- Information exchange, including as mutually agreed and appropriate, qualitative data and quantitative data
- Forums for evaluation of case studies and joint problem solving
- Exchange of best practices for managing, analyzing, and saving data
- Development of an up-to-date log of all relevant resources, such as pertinent health guidance, as well as contact information for key officials and organizations within the countries of each CORDS network (e.g., local IHR focal point in each country that is a member of a network)
- Training of networks and sharing of case studies, methods, and training materials pertaining to issues of greatest interest to members (e.g., laboratory techniques, options for harmonizing case definitions, different types of approaches to surveillance for various diseases, etc.)
- Development of a model, integrated, One Health curriculum to support disease surveillance and implementation of the International Health Regulations

- Discussion and advocacy around priority technical or policy issues identified by members that CORDS can jointly address more effectively than individual efforts of members

Joint Research

- Development and implementation of joint research agendas across interested networks
- Support of processes and mechanisms to disseminate and bring the results of the joint research into actions and policies to improve disease surveillance

Resource Sharing

- As appropriate, promoting the sharing of laboratory and other resources
- As agreed to by Member Networks, facilitating secondment arrangements whereby an expert from one network is detailed to another network to work for a period of time
- Facilitating inter-network efforts to mobilize resources and enhance technology for surveillance and communications

Advancing One Health

CORDS will serve as a source for on-the-ground application of One Health principles and will share lessons learned with the broader community. For instance, CORDS will:

- Ensure that membership in CORDS is based on the One Health concept by encouraging participation by entities that have responsibility for human, animal, and environmental health
- Include One Health as a main component in all CORDS activities
- Feature One Health on the CORDS website and in the CORDS electronic bulletin

Promoting Innovation

CORDS will strive to support innovative ideas and disease surveillance technologies, operational procedures, and practices by both providing a central forum for the sharing of innovations in the practice of disease surveillance between CORDS networks and by facilitating the use of individual or multiple networks to pilot test promising technologies and practices that would benefit disease surveillance or response in the networks. For instance, CORDS will:

- Explore opportunities for the co-development of innovative products, operational models, or strategies (e.g., mobile technology, social networking, mapping, and other technologies)
- As agreed by CORDS members, facilitate arrangements for pilot testing across regions and continents
- Where possible, publish results or otherwise share lessons learned and promote innovative tools or practices that work to improve disease surveillance
- Design public conferences that promote public dialogue on emerging technologies (e.g., host a CORDS “Tech Summit” and invite leaders from the technology sector to present new technologies and processes that have potential to enhance disease detection and response).

A timeline for the launch of these programmatic activities and other organizational activities is included in Appendix B.

Building Sustainable Networks

CORDS will work to demonstrate the value of multi-country disease surveillance networks and will provide technical assistance to networks in their efforts to secure funding. CORDS understands that support and recognition from the network's respective national governments is important for the sustainability of networks. National-level support could be provided in many forms, such as: (1) financial support from national governments to their regional networks; (2) in-kind support, such as the provision of office and meeting spaces and facilities; or (3) other expressions of support for the networks, such as staff secondment, policy commitment, etc.

In coordination with the networks, CORDS will work to:

Strengthen Existing Networks

- Provide technical support to networks for their fund-raising efforts. CORDS will not undertake direct fund-raising on behalf of the networks, but it can bolster network fundraising efforts by:
 - Including a fund-raising session in the annual conference to share information on how networks have been able to engage funders
 - Hosting periodic calls of network members to exchange advice on network fund-raising
 - Inviting fund-raising experts to participate in CORDS as technical experts
 - Providing feedback to networks on their regional fund-raising strategy
- Provide training and experience sharing on organization and management of networks
- At the request of specific countries: (1) develop materials and presentations for ministry-level officials that demonstrate the value of multi-country disease surveillance networks, and describe network needs; (2) meet with relevant ministries; and/or (3) sponsor minister-level events and deliver CORDS essential messages
- Facilitate networking and communication among CORDS members

Promote the Development of New Networks

- Encourage the development of new networks, particularly in areas of high disease risk, by:
 - Identifying regions that would most benefit from having a disease surveillance network
 - Developing a region-specific strategy for outreach to key government officials and relevant organizations in targeted regions
 - Identifying among CORDS network leaders potential mentors for emerging networks
 - Creating a general guide that describes good practices in establishing new networks

CORDS Partnerships

CORDS was founded on the principles of partnership, engagement, trust, and inclusion. Thus, CORDS seeks the active involvement of global and regional organizations, including private companies and other organizations that share in the vision and mission of CORDS. CORDS aims to advance and support the respective missions of WHO, OIE, and FAO.

Operations: Program Management and Oversight

The operational philosophy behind the central CORDS organization is to be small and nimble and to support and showcase the real essence of CORDS, which is the network members. The CORDS Executive Board will be the decision-making body of CORDS, and it will establish or otherwise approve the objectives, policies, and plans of action for the organization. In accord with the trust-based and collaborative culture of CORDS, the Executive Board will act based on consensus. The Executive Board will be supported by a modestly sized Secretariat, which will include an Executive Director who will report to the Executive Board and advance the goals, plans, and initiatives defined by the Board. The CORDS Bylaws are included as Appendix C.

Measuring the Impact of CORDS

Under the leadership of the Executive Board, metrics will be developed to measure the impact and effectiveness of CORDS. In 2012, CORDS will develop and administer an initial baseline survey of CORDS member networks to assess current conditions. The results of this baseline survey will be used to gauge the impact of CORDS as the organization matures. CORDS will then conduct periodic surveys and continue to measure the extent to which its programs help to build and support networks. The survey will assess both networks' perceptions of the value of CORDS activities and the extent to which the capability of member networks are strengthened by participation in CORDS.

Resource Mobilization for a Sustainable CORDS

The leadership of CORDS is currently preparing both a Business Plan and a Resource Mobilization Plan designed to successfully implement the objectives described in this Strategic Plan.

Appendix A

Chart of CORDS Infectious Disease Surveillance Networks

Connecting Organizations for Regional Disease Surveillance (CORDS)

Name	Member Countries	Description
Middle East Consortium on Infectious Disease Surveillance (MECIDS)	Israel, Jordan, Palestinian Authority	MECIDS was established in 2003 to improve the ability of member nations to detect and respond to infectious disease threats through integrated surveillance systems and joint epidemiological and laboratory training. It is governed by an executive board guided by a set of standing operating procedures and associated protocols with activities coordinated by an international secretariat. For more information, visit www.mecids.org or www.ghsi.org/projects/mecids.html
Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance Network (MBDS)	Cambodia, China (Yunnan and Guangxi Provinces), Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam	MBDS was established in 1999 to strengthen national and Mekong sub regional capabilities in disease surveillance and response to outbreaks of priority diseases so that they can be effectively controlled. MBDS is governed by memoranda of understanding between the member countries and an executive board with activities coordinated by a secretariat and country coordinators. For more information, visit www.mbdsoffice.com or www.ghsi.org/projects/mbds.html
Southern African Centre for Infectious Disease Surveillance (SACIDS)	Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia	SACIDS is a consortium of southern African medical and veterinary academic and research institutions in the animal, human, and agricultural sectors. SACIDS was established in 2009 and is governed by two Deputy Directors, one for the human and the other for the animal health sector, and at the national level the Coordinator is assisted by a deputy from the opposite sector with activities guided by a secretariat located in Tanzania. For more information, visit www.sacids.org or www.ghsi.org/projects/sacids.html
East African Integrated Disease Surveillance Network (EAIDSNet)	Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda	EAIDSNet was established in 2000 to enhance cross-country and cross-institutional collaboration on disease control to improve the quality of data on communicable disease and the flow and sharing of information to improve the health of the East African population. EAIDSNet is a health sector initiative of the East African Community. For more information, visit www.eac.int/eidsnet
Southeastern Europe Health Network (SEEHN)	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia	SEEHN was founded in 2001 to coordinate and help with the implementation and evaluation of health policy and services among its regional members. The Network is supported by a secretariat run jointly by the council of Europe and the WHO Regional Office for Europe. For more information, visit www.euro.who.int/stabilitypact/network/20040611.1
Asian Partnership on Emerging Infectious Diseases Research (APEIR)	Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Vietnam, Thailand	APEIR is a research partnership comprised of researchers, government officials, and practitioners that brings together experts from different disciplines to explore research and policy questions in animal and public health. APEIR began as the Asian Partnership for Avian Influenza Research in response to the spread of H5N1 and expanded to EIDs research. It now includes more than 30 partner institutions including: the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Natural Science Foundation of China, the Ministry of Public Health and Health Systems Research Institute of Thailand, the Ministry of Science and Technology of Vietnam, the Ministry of Health of Indonesia, the Ministry of Health of Cambodia, and the Ministry of Health of Lao PDR. For more information, visit http://www.apeiresearch.net/main.php

Appendix B
Timeline for CORDS Activities

Programmatic Activities	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2010				
Co-host CORDS/WHO Workshop at Training Programs in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network (TEPHINET) Conference				✓
Host data-sharing workshop (MECIDS)				✓
2011				
Chair CORDS session at Prince Mahidol Award Conference (PMAC) 2011	✓			
Present CORDS to PMAC organizing committee and request CORDS Program at 2013 PMAC Conference	✓			
Present CORDS to members of ASEAN + 3 at PMAC	✓			
Present CORDS at 1st Int'l One Health Congress (Melbourne)	✓			
Host One Health Workshop				
Additional 2011 activities under development				
2012				
Develop agenda for CORDS program at 2013 PMAC Meeting				
Survey CORDS Network members using baseline survey to evaluate CORDS impact over time				
Participate in 2-4 workshops or training sessions (agendas, dates, and locations TBD)				
Additional 2012 activities under development				
2013				
CORDS program at 2013 PMAC Meeting ("hard launch" of CORDS)				
Participate in 2-4 workshops or training sessions (agendas, dates, and locations TBD)				
Identify high-priority target region for potential creation of new network				

Organizational Activities	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2010				
Meeting with Co-Chair of Steering Committee regarding Strategic Planning Process			✓	
Teleconferences of Strategic and Governance Subcommittees				✓
Meeting of Steering Committee to discuss Strategic Plan and Bylaws (Annecy)				✓
2011				
Meeting of Steering Committee on Strategic Planning at PMAC	✓			
Hold CORDS Organizational Meeting (Annecy)		✓		
Steering Committee Members Approve CORDS Strategic Plan & Bylaws		✓		
Discuss Resource Mobilization Strategies		✓		
Agree process for selecting Chair, Chair-Elect, and Executive Board members		✓		
Form subgroup to identify potential Cooperating Partners for Executive Board membership		✓		
Identify Network representatives for Executive Board membership and select Chair & Chair-Elect of CORDS Executive Board		✓		
Form Nominating Committee to (1) identify candidates for Executive Director and (2) propose detailed CORDS membership criteria				
Form ad hoc working group tasked with developing Resource Mobilization Plan (“Resource Mobilization Working Group”)				
Meetings of CORDS Executive Board				
Nominating Committee provides detailed progress report to Executive Board				
Meet with potential Cooperating Partners according to Resource Mobilization Plan				
Develop CORDS website				
Interviews of Executive Director candidates				

Organizational Activities	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
2012				
Define legal structure of CORDS International Secretariat				
Launch CORDS website				
Interviews of Executive Director candidates				
Executive Board selects Executive Director				
Hire CORDS Executive Director				
Obtain letters of endorsement of/support for CORDS				
Meetings of Executive Board				
Meet with potential Cooperating Partners according to Resource Mobilization Plan				
Establish office of CORDS Secretariat				
Executive Director to recruit other Secretariat staff				
New CORDS Secretariat formally replaces NTI				

Appendix C
Connecting Organizations for
Regional Disease Surveillance
(CORDS)

BYLAWS

Approved on 22 April 2011

CONTENTS

- Article 1. Structure**
- Article 2. Purpose**
- Article 3. Definitions**
- Article 4. Membership of CORDS**
- Article 5. Steering Committee**
- Article 6. CORDS Executive Board**
- Article 7. Secretariat**
- Article 8. Administrative Provisions**
- Article 9. Dissolution**
- Article 10. Political Activities**
- Article 11. Management of Conflicts of Interest**
- Article 12. Amendment**
- Article 13. Entry into Force**

CORDS BYLAWS

Approved on 22 April 2011

ARTICLE 1. STRUCTURE

Connecting Organizations for Regional Disease Surveillance (“CORDS”) is an unincorporated association established in and governed by the laws of Washington, District of Columbia, United States. The applicable provisions of these Bylaws shall apply to CORDS as an unincorporated association.

Upon formal and legal establishment of CORDS, the organization shall convert its status from an unincorporated association to a nonprofit organization governed by these Bylaws and the applicable provisions of *[insert country]* law. At that time, CORDS will be registered at the *[insert details]* in *[insert city/country]* and operate under the supervision of *[insert country authority]*.

ARTICLE 2. PURPOSE

The mission of CORDS is to link regional disease surveillance networks to improve global capacity to respond to infectious diseases.

CORDS focuses on four (4) strategic objectives:

- *Improving Capacity.* CORDS facilitates the sharing between networks of case studies, technical expertise, data, best practices, and resources for networks to develop new skills and build operational partnerships across regions;
- *Advancing One Health.* CORDS seeks to modernize disease detection by improving coordination between animal, human, and environmental health sectors at national, regional, and international levels;
- *Promoting Innovation.* CORDS serves as a venue for networks to share their innovative ideas and approaches to disease surveillance and provides an organized platform for co-development of new technologies and innovations within and across regions; and
- *Building Sustainable Networks.* CORDS works to strengthen multi-country disease surveillance networks and facilitate the creation of new networks in areas of high disease risk.

ARTICLE 3. DEFINITIONS

Capitalized terms used but not otherwise defined herein shall have the meaning set forth below:

- (a) “*Advisor*” means an individual invited by the Executive Board to provide expertise about matters specified by the Executive Board.
- (b) “*Chairperson*” means the individual appointed by consensus of the Executive Board to serve as head of the Executive Board of CORDS.
- (c) “*Chairperson-Elect*” means the individual appointed by consensus of the Executive Board to serve as Chairperson-Elect of the Executive Board of CORDS.
- (d) “*CORDS*” means Connecting Organizations for Regional Disease Surveillance.
- (e) “*Consensus*” means a condition of general consent that allows the Executive Board to make decisions without a vote of its Board members.
- (f) “*Cooperating Partner*” means an individual or organization that supports the CORDS mission through social, intellectual, financial, technical, or other contributions.
- (g) “*Executive Board*” means the governing body of CORDS.
- (h) “*Executive Board Member*” (“*Member*”) means either (i) an individual who is appointed by a Network to serve on the Executive Board as a representative of his or her Network, or (ii) an individual who is a representative of a Cooperating Partner.
- (i) “*Executive Director*” means the chief executive officer of the CORDS Secretariat.
- (j) “*Network*” means a multi-country disease surveillance group comprised of at least three (3) countries represented by agencies, institutions, centers, and/or other entities.
- (k) “*Observer*” means a non-Executive Board member invited by the Executive Board Chairperson, in consultation with the Executive Director, to participate in Executive Board meetings or other CORDS activities without formal decision-making authority.
- (l) “*Organizational Meeting*” means the meeting of the CORDS Steering Committee to formally establish CORDS as an organization by adopting these Bylaws.
- (m) “*Secretariat*” means the operational office of CORDS.
- (n) “*Steering Committee*” means the group of individuals representing Networks and Cooperating Partners that existed before the establishment of the Executive Board of CORDS to develop the CORDS strategic plan and governance structure and to convene the Organizational Meeting. The Steering Committee will end its function and cease to exist upon the adoption of these Bylaws and convening of the Executive Board.

ARTICLE 4. MEMBERSHIP OF CORDS

- 4.1 Membership of CORDS shall be open to Networks that share the vision, mission, and objectives of CORDS, as approved by the Executive Board.

ARTICLE 5. STEERING COMMITTEE

- 5.1 The Steering Committee will have the same authority and responsibility of the Executive Board.
- 5.2 The Steering Committee will convene the first Executive Board and shall determine the precise number of Executive Board Members from each network, as well as which Cooperating Partners shall serve on the first Executive Board.
- 5.3 The Steering Committee will end its function and cease to exist upon the adoption of these Bylaws and convening of the Executive Board.

ARTICLE 6. CORDS EXECUTIVE BOARD**6.1 Functions**

The Executive Board is the governing body of CORDS with all powers of governing and directing, and of overseeing the management and affairs of, the organization. In accordance with the mission of CORDS, the Executive Board shall have the authority and responsibility to:

- set policies that promote equal partnership among all Networks;
- develop strategies for accomplishing the mission of CORDS;
- facilitate the commitment and ownership, trust building, solidarity, and collective action among Networks;
- invite participation from Cooperating Partners and other stakeholders;
- select and, if needed, replace the Executive Director of CORDS;
- form a Nominating Committee that has the responsibility for developing more detailed membership criteria and for identifying and nominating for the Executive Board's consideration one (1) or more candidates for the Executive Director position;
- establish such other committees and working groups and invite Advisors to provide guidance as it deems necessary and appropriate;
- consider strategies for mobilizing resources for CORDS and approve funding decisions of the Secretariat;
- determine the number of staff who will report to the Executive Director;

- approve operational guidelines, work plans, proposed budgets, and recommendations developed by the Secretariat or by any working group or committee convened by the Executive Board;
- share the responsibility and establish the criteria for mobilizing resources necessary for the full functioning of CORDS; and
- carry out all other actions specified in these Bylaws and those that relate to the mission of CORDS.

6.2 Membership and Composition

The Executive Board shall be comprised of not more than twenty (20) Members as set forth below.

- 6.2.1 Networks. Up to twelve (12) Members representing the Networks may serve on the Executive Board. Networks comprised of more than four (4) countries may have up to two (2) representatives serve on the Executive Board. Networks comprised of four (4) countries or fewer may have no more than (1) representative serve on the Executive Board. The Executive Board shall determine the precise number of Members from each Network.
- 6.2.2 Cooperating Partners. Up to eight (8) Cooperating Partner representatives may serve on the Executive Board.
- 6.2.3 Observers. The Executive Board may invite Cooperating Partner representatives to participate as Observers in Executive Board activities. The Executive Board shall determine the number of Observers it wishes to invite to participate.

6.3 Chairperson and Chairperson-Elect

- 6.3.1 Appointment. The Executive Board shall be led by one (1) Chairperson and one (1) Chairperson-Elect, both selected by and from among Executive Board Members representing Networks, on a rotational basis. The initial Chairperson and Chairperson-Elect shall be selected by the Steering Committee as soon as possible after the Organizational Meeting. The Chairperson-Elect shall succeed the Chairperson upon expiration of the Chairperson's term.
- 6.3.2 Functions. The Chairperson will convene and chair Executive Board meetings and may authorize the Chairperson-Elect to act on his or her behalf. Between Executive Board meetings, the Chairperson and Chairperson-Elect will have important roles in advocacy and development of CORDS, oversight of the Secretariat on behalf of the Executive Board, and responsibility for agenda setting and procedural matters. The Chairperson shall also have the authority to take action on behalf of the Executive Board on urgent matters. All such decisions must be communicated to the Executive Board promptly and may be considered for further review, if needed, by the Executive Board.
- 6.3.3 Resignation. The Chairperson may resign at any time after giving written notice to the Executive Board.

6.4 Appointment of Members Other than the Chairperson and Chairperson-Elect

- 6.4.1 Network Members. Each Network shall establish a process for selecting its own Executive Board representatives and alternate(s).
- 6.4.2 Cooperating Partner Members. Cooperating Partners may identify their own representative and alternate(s) to serve as members of the Executive Board.

6.5 Terms

- 6.5.1 Chairperson and Chairperson-Elect. The terms of the Chairperson and Chairperson-Elect shall each be one (1) year. Each of these terms may be extended for a period of one (1) year by decision of the Executive Board.
- 6.5.2 Executive Board. The terms of Executive Board Members shall be for a period of two (2) years and may be renewable once, for an additional one (1) year. For the inaugural Executive Board, for those Networks with two (2) members, one (1) of those members must resign after an initial two (2) year term to begin a staggering process of Executive Board membership. The Networks will determine which Executive Board Member will resign
- 6.5.3 Observers. Observers shall participate in Executive Board activities for a duration determined by the Executive Board.

6.6 Frequency of Meetings

The Executive Board shall meet as often as necessary but no less than two (2) times each year. One (1) of these meetings shall be conducted in person on a date and at a location to be determined by the Executive Board.

6.7 Manner of Acting/Quorum

The Executive Board shall strive to make all decisions by unanimous consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, a majority vote of the Executive Board will be required for action. One-half or more of all Executive Board Members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Executive Board. Executive Board decisions may be made at meetings or by teleconference, facsimile, electronic mail, or regular mail. Executive Board Members may participate in person or by alternate.

6.8 Committees, Working Groups, and Advisors

Committees and working groups established by the Executive Board shall meet at regular intervals in person, by teleconference, or by other electronic means. Advisors shall serve at the discretion of the Executive Board.

ARTICLE 7. SECRETARIAT

7.1 Composition

The Secretariat shall be located in *[insert city, country]* and shall be headed by the Executive Director. The Secretariat will be responsible for managing the operational and business affairs of CORDS. Secretariat staff will be selected by the Executive Director under policies and procedures approved by the Executive Board.

7.2 Functions

The Secretariat is the operational body of CORDS and reports to the Executive Board. The Secretariat shall, at the direction of the Executive Board:

- manage the operational and business affairs of CORDS;
- execute the decisions of the Executive Board and communicate Executive Board decisions to stakeholders;
- carry out all programmatic activities identified in the CORDS strategic plan, in accordance with direction from the Executive Board, and report regularly to the Executive Board on CORDS activities;
- take minutes at Executive Board meetings;
- mobilize resources to support the work of CORDS;
- support the Executive Board in advocacy, resource mobilization, and development activities;
- track, map, and share with CORDS members the work of each Network;
- establish and oversee mechanisms for coordination, communication, and evaluation;
- exercise fiduciary responsibility for CORDS and arrange for independent, annual audits of CORDS as required by law;
- organize CORDS conferences, teleconferences, and events;
- develop work plans, budgets, and an annual report for internal purposes on CORDS work, including financial accounts, revenue and expenditure projections, and conferences; and
- carry out any other CORDS activities as requested by the Executive Board.

ARTICLE 8. ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

[Insert required language depending on country of CORDS establishment.]

The official language of CORDS shall be English. The Executive Board may consider, on a case-by-case basis, requests from Executive Board members for interpretations or other language assistance.

ARTICLE 9. DISSOLUTION

In the case of dissolution of CORDS, no assets or property of CORDS shall be conveyed or distributed to any founder, director, Executive Board Member, or other individual, nor to any organization created or operated for profit, but shall be distributed only to similar charitable, educational, and/or scientific organizations to be used to comply with the original aims of CORDS.

ARTICLE 10. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

CORDS shall not participate in or intervene in (including by the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

ARTICLE 11. MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Whenever an Executive Board Member has a personal financial interest or any other potential conflict of interest in any matter coming before the Executive Board, the affected person shall (a) fully disclose the nature of the interest, and (b) withdraw from decision making on the matter. The Executive Board can further develop a detailed policy regarding conflict of interest.

ARTICLE 12. AMENDMENT

These Bylaws may be amended by the Executive Board at any time and in accordance with any applicable country of establishment rules.

ARTICLE 13. ENTRY INTO FORCE

These Bylaws shall enter into force after their approval by the Steering Committee at the Organizational Meeting and in accordance with any applicable legal and organizational requirements of the country of establishment.

This page intentionally left blank.

