



**The Global Shea Alliance
GSA Secretariat Office
Accra, Ghana
Executive Committee Meeting (Biannual)**

Minutes
8 June 2015
9:00am

EC Members Present

Moumouni Konate, President
Senyo Kpelly, 1st Vice President
Shannon Hess, 2nd Vice President
Gilles Adamon, EC Member
Jibril Bokani, EC Member
Edwige Hammond, EC Member
Badiè Marico, EC Member
Antoine Turpin, EC Member
Félicité Yameogo, EC Member

Advisory Board Members Present

Kathleen Wu, USAID

Secretariat Staff Present

Joseph Funt, Managing Director
Aaron Adu, Assistant Director
Doris Anum-Darhuso, Finance Director
Shine Aidam, Administrative Assistant
Prince Nunoo, Membership Coordinator
Frank Owusu, M&E Coordinator
Grace Perkins, Communications Manager
Sarah Watson, Peace Corps Coordinator

Agenda

- I. Call to Order and Introductions
- II. Addendums to the Agenda
- III. Review of GSA Strategic Focus and Current Initiatives
- IV. Deloitte Presentation, EC Roles and Responsibilities
- V. 2012-15 Achievements, Challenges, and Obstacles
- VI. Proposal for U.S. and European Satellite Offices
- VII. Presentation of 2015-16 Work Plan and Budget
- VIII. Formation of Subcommittees
- IX. Any Other Business
- X. Closing Remarks

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I. Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by President Moumouni Konate at 9:05am. President Konate welcomed all EC members and secretariat staff. He encouraged the EC members to get to know each other during the meeting in order to work successfully as a team. President Konate held a moment of silence in honor of the national disaster that occurred in Ghana the previous week.

All EC members and GSA secretariat staff introduced themselves.

II. Addendums to the Agenda

President Konate asked the EC members for any proposed changes to the meeting agenda. One EC member noted that it is important to adopt the previous meeting's minutes.

- a. Decision/action: Agreed that general assembly **minutes were adopted without changes**. Agreed that June meeting minutes and all further minutes will be adopted via email before the next EC meeting in order to authorize secretariat to begin approved work and save time.

III. Review of GSA Strategic Focus and Current Initiatives

The managing director reviewed the strategic focus and current initiatives of the GSA. He noted that the strategic focus was established by the EC in 2012 and adopted by GSA members at the general assembly. The GSA focuses on four strategic areas: market expansion, value chain competitiveness, policy advocacy, and sustainability impact. The managing director also reviewed the GSA's nine primary projects and their objectives. These projects are as follows.

Annual international shea conference in Africa. The objective is to expand shea markets in African countries, share information and best practices with stakeholders, convene GSA members at the general assembly, support the national association in the host country, and increase GSA members and funding.

National association support and quality campaigns. The objective is to improve competitiveness of the industry and build the capacity of the national associations to implement country-level projects.

Sustainability program. The objective is to implement women's empowerment and tree population projects through public-private partnerships and promote sustainable shea production.

African products exhibition. The objective is to expand markets in Africa and support national associations and small businesses in Africa.

Implementation of quality standard. The objective is to improve competitiveness of the industry by promoting quality practices and increasing yield.

Annual U.S. conference. The objective is to expand shea markets in the United States and increase GSA membership and funding.

U.S. chocolate initiative. The objective is to expand shea markets in the United States.

India chocolate initiative. The objective is to expand shea markets in India.

International promotion. The objective is to expand the utilization of shea in the food and cosmetic industries.

After the presentation, the President asked for comments or questions from the EC members.



- a. Discussion: **India chocolate initiative.** The managing director was asked to provide more information on this project. He noted that the project started midway through 2014. The secretariat is working with the national associations in Mali, Ghana, and Burkina Faso to engage ministries in each country. The ministries will authorize each country's representatives in the World Trade Organization to engage India on its policy for allowing cocoa butter equivalents in its chocolate.

The President noted that the timeframe for this project may be similar to that of the U.S. chocolate initiative. The U.S. citizen's petition to the FDA was submitted after the 2013 shea conference in Abuja. It was noted that undertaking both initiatives is important for the GSA and producing countries because the United States and India have two of the largest chocolate markets. The strategy is expected to be effective because of the legal and technical strategies that have been developed for each country. Furthermore, the national associations will lobby their politicians in their respective countries, and the GSA will engage stakeholders in Washington, DC and Geneva.

IV. Deloitte Presentation, EC Roles and Responsibilities

President Konate invited Mr. Nana Sackey from Deloitte to give a presentation on the roles and responsibilities of an executive committee. Mr. Sackey reviewed the mission of the EC, which is to direct the strategy of the association and to authorize the secretariat to function on behalf of the committee. He noted that a best practice of any executive committee is to operate through subcommittees, which should be made up of EC members with experience in that particular subject area. Some of the most common subcommittees are Finance and Audit and Advocacy. He also discussed the importance of terms of reference which outline the EC's responsibilities and rights.

Mr. Sackey then took questions from EC members.

- a. Discussion/action: **EC charter.** An EC member asked about the importance of a charter for the executive committee. The representative from Deloitte stressed the importance of this document. The managing director confirmed that the GSA guidelines includes a description of the EC's roles and responsibilities. EC members agreed to make the EC charter a separate document with greater detail including descriptions of subcommittees.
- b. Discussion/action: **Financial and operations manuals.** The secretariat is currently reviewing and editing the GSA's financial and operational manuals. They will be sent out to the EC in the coming months for approval.
- c. Discussion/action: **Terms of reference for subcommittees.** EC members noted that subcommittees have worked well. It was suggested that these subcommittees should become more operational than in the past. Members agreed that subcommittees should draft and adopt terms of reference.
- d. Discussion: **Forming subcommittees.** An EC member asked the representative from Deloitte how to form effective subcommittees if EC members do not have the corresponding technical backgrounds. Mr. Sackey noted that consultants can act as experts and advisors to the EC in these situations.



- e. Discussion/action: **Management letter to 2014 audit.** An EC member asked whether the secretariat had received a management letter related to the 2014 audit. The managing director confirmed the draft letter was received and the secretariat will respond and finalize the letter in the coming month. The final letter will be sent to the EC.
- f. Discussion/action: **Working with consultants to review EC charter.** President Konate asked Mr. Sackey whether Deloitte would be able to conduct a pro bono review of the EC charter. Mr. Sackey confirmed that Deloitte would be able to review a draft and provide feedback.
- g. Discussion/action: **Secretariat performance evaluations.** The President and 1st Vice-President noted the importance of secretariat performance evaluations. The managing director mentioned he evaluates all secretariat staff on an annual basis and can forward copies to the EC. EC members agreed to update the terms of reference for the managing director and provide formalized feedback on strengths and areas of improvement every six months.

V. 2012-15 Achievements, Challenges, and Obstacles

The secretariat gave an overview of the achievements, challenges, and obstacles for the GSA from 2012 to 2015. The secretariat noted that the GSA has grown significantly, developed successful projects, and raised substantial funding over the past three years. However, he noted that the GSA faces challenges, including limited membership outside of Africa and insufficient advancement on international policy and promotion activities. He pinpointed two obstacles for the GSA: insufficient engagement with international companies and organizations and limiting geographic location of the GSA headquarters.

VI. Proposal for U.S. and European Satellite Offices

The secretariat proposed opening two satellite promotion offices in Europe (Brussels) and the United States (Washington DC). The GSA headquarters would remain in Accra and oversee financial and administrative management, membership coordination and expansion, African events management, sustainability program management, quality campaign and national association support activities, quality standard implementation, and fundraising. The satellite offices would undertake policy advocacy for the U.S. and India chocolate initiatives, promote shea in North America and EU, plan the U.S./EU conferences, expand international membership, recruit new sustainability partners, and raise funds.

EC members discussed the proposal.

- a. Discussion: **Costs.** EC members asked about the costs of setting up and operating the offices. The managing director noted the proposed budget allocates approximately \$55,000 USD annually for salaries, office related expenses and travel for each office.
- b. Discussion: **Impact.** EC members asked how the satellite offices will help women at the base of the industry. The managing director noted promotion efforts lead to greater exports and improved markets for shea collectors and processors. In addition, establishing a stronger presence in the United States and Europe will attract more sustainability partners to invest in shea communities.

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- c. Discussion: **Timeline.** EC members asked whether the offices should be opened one at a time. Because the GSA is undertaking important policy projects in both Europe and the United States, it is a good opportunity to open both. It's also important to establish promotion initiatives and increase membership base in both regions at the same time.
- d. Discussion: **African office.** Several EC members noted that the African office must also enhance engagements with government, prospective new members, and local funding sources related to the GSA projects. The managing director also noted the potential synergies between the offices especially around promotion.
- e. Discussion: **Location.** EC members asked why the U.S. office would be based in Washington, DC rather than New York City. The managing director responded that Washington, DC is the political capital and that advocacy activities will be most effective there. Furthermore, many international donors and research institutions are based in DC. New York City is also relatively close to DC, so the coordinator will be able to travel to engage private sector members.
- f. Discussion: **Registration of offices.** Several EC members asked whether the offices would be registered in the United States and Belgium. The managing director responded that he would consult with the lawyers on this matter and make recommendations to the EC. The satellite office coordinators will work as consultants for the GSA.
- g. Discussion/action: **Approval of satellite offices.** Satellite offices unanimously approved by EC members.

VII. Presentation of 2015-16 Work Plan and Budget

The managing director presented the 2015-16 work plan and budget. EC members reviewed and discussed the following activities.

A. Promotion Activities

- a. Discussion/action. **Proposal to hold Shea 2016 in Mali.** The national association in Mali submitted a proposal to host Shea 2016. The representative from Mali noted that the Malian government is willing to support the conference with national television and radio announcements. Several other organizations have also been identified as strategic partners in planning the conference. One EC member noted that holding the conference in Mali may limit the number of international participants because of company travel ban policies. Other EC members agreed that the U.S. and European coordinators will should make efforts to engage the private sector in those regions. EC members approved Mali to hold Shea 2016, with one EC voting against the motion. It was also agreed that the secretariat will work with the national association in Mali to plan a successful conference.
- b. Discussion/action: **Conference surpluses.** EC members asked how profit earned from the conference is used. The managing director noted that any surpluses are allocated in the general funds budget that is approved by the EC. He noted the previous EC authorized a small incentive payment to the national association in Burkina Faso for their success at Shea 2015.

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Agreed the EC will decide upon review of final conference financial report. One EC member noted sponsors expect GSA donations to be allocated to GSA initiatives. Agreed that any national association hosting the conference will have an agreed MOU with secretariat regarding sharing expenses and income for the conference.

c. Discussion/action: **US/EU Conferences.** EC members noted that the secretariat should make efforts to include women collectors to participate in these events. Agreed that the secretariat would help write letters of introduction for visas and other logistical support for African stakeholders to attend these conferences.

d. Discussion: **Redistribution of events management and fundraising responsibilities.** The managing director noted that the secretariat will take a regional approach to event management and fundraising and responsibilities will fall under the U.S. coordinator, EU coordinator, and Accra staff.

B. Sustainability

a. Discussion: **Clarification on international event participation.** EC members asked for clarification on how the secretariat participates in international events. The managing director noted that secretariat staff take three to four promotional trips based on conference, trade show, and working group opportunities. During these trips, the staff identify and build relationships with potential new members/sustainability partners.

C. Quality Standards

a. Discussion/action: **Quality working group.** EC members who also serve on the quality working group noted that the group does not have an official president or group leader. Agreed that the secretariat will continue to coordinate group activities and that the group can discuss election of a leader at the next meeting.

D. National Association Support

a. Discussion: **Feedback from national associations.**

Cote d'Ivoire. The representative from Cote d'Ivoire discussed challenges of encouraging companies to pay bonuses to women collectors. This challenge occurs in part because export taxes levied by the Ivorian government. She also discussed challenges of formally registering women's cooperatives. Several EC members offered suggestions.

Mali. The representative from Mali explained the increased demand for trainings and asked if the GSA would be able to support training for more women. The managing director noted that recruiting more sustainability partners will bring more opportunities to support women collectors. The secretariat is also actively seeking funding for regional projects that will involve all national associations.

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Burkina Faso. President Konate noted that, after the Shea 2015 conference, the national association in Burkina Faso will join as a sustainability partner. President Konate also noted that the national association in Burkina Faso needs the GSA secretariat to clarify the MOU in order to begin the quality campaigns.

Nigeria. The representative from Nigeria discussed the need for a coordinator. EC members discussed that funding for a coordinator is not included in the budget for this year. Other EC members offered solutions on how to recruit and employ coordinators. Agreed that, if possible, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire should receive support to establish a permanent secretariat. The GSA will continue to review the budget to find source of support for these two national associations. The managing director also noted that the amount in general funds depend on the success of GSA projects.

E. Administrative and Development

- a. Discussion: **Updates to website.** The secretariat is in the process of updating the GSA website and will create a member resource page with information, including the sustainability program.
- b. Discussion/action: **Communications strategy.** Agreed that the secretariat will develop FAQs and responses to guide EC members when engaging with the media. Agreed that the secretariat will develop a communications strategy for engaging media outlining specific roles and responsibilities of EC members and secretariat staff.
- c. Discussion/action: **Adoption of budget and work plan.** EC members adopted the proposed budget and work plan. The managing director noted that the budget and work plan will continue to change as new sources of funding are secured. All changes will be emailed to EC members.

VIII. Formation of Subcommittees

President Konate called on EC members to form subcommittees. Members of each subcommittee will define the types of communication and information needed to achieve their goals. President Konate also asked if there were any suggestions for new subcommittees.

- a. Discussion/action: **Advocacy subcommittee.** EC members agreed to create a subcommittee that will oversee and support the GSA's policy advocacy efforts. Several EC members have already been involved in advocacy projects and can contribute ideas and resources and circulate information to the rest of the EC.
- b. Discussion/action: **Creation of subcommittees.** President Konate called for volunteers for the three subcommittees, Finance and Audit, Fundraising and Membership, and Advocacy. Agreed that EC members would serve on the following subcommittees:

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- i. Finance and Audit: President Moumouni Konate, Mr. Antoine Turpin, and Madam Edwige Hammond
- ii. Fundraising and Membership: Vice President Shannon Hess, Mr. Badiè Marico, and Mr. Jibril Bokani
- iii. Advocacy: Madam Félicité Yameogo, Mr. Antoine Turpin, Vice President Senyo Kpelly, President Moumouni Konate, and Mr. Badiè Marico

IX. Other Business

President Konate called upon the EC members and secretariat for any remaining business.

- a. Discussion/action: **Collaboration with ECOWAS.** The assistant director noted that the secretariat is planning to work with ECOWAS in Nigeria. The secretariat is drafting an MOU. Agreed that the secretariat will send this document to the EC for input.
- b. Discussion/action: **Respect of contracts.** EC members discussed the challenges that industrial processors face when signing contracts with regional shea kernel traders. Industrial processors reported that some traders do not uphold their contract to deliver shea kernels to international buyers. EC members discussed the possibility of working directly with women's groups, and others noted that the national associations can provide assessments on potential business partners. Members mentioned that currently there is no way resolve these conflicts because the traders are not members of GSA or national associations. Agreed that GSA members should encourage their suppliers to join national associations and the GSA where they will be subject to upholding the common principles. The organizations also help to mediate the conflicts..
- c. Discussion/action: **African Products Exhibition.** The assistant director asked EC members for their feedback on the next African Products Exhibition. He proposed two strategies: renting booths at existing cosmetics exhibitions in Hong Kong, Turkey, or Morocco or holding an independent GSA event in South Africa or Nigeria. EC members discussed the objective of the exhibition, which is to promote finished cosmetics products made in Africa and that contain shea as an ingredient. Several members suggested seeking assistance from government agencies in the hosting country or in shea producing countries to support exhibitors and participants to attend. The exhibition will take place in November. Agreed that the secretariat would send proposals for EC members to decide between three locations: Nigeria, South Africa, or Morocco.

X. Closing Remarks

President Konate offered closing remarks. He thanked all EC members and secretariat staff for their time and important contributions. President Konate expressed his desire that all present will continue to work hard for the future of the shea industry. The meeting was called to a close at 5:17pm.