

Board of Directors' seminar 14-15 November 2024

Present

From the Board of Directors:

Carsten Stendevad, chair
 Caroline Tromer Dragsdahl
 Henrik Bodskov
 Kim Simonsen
 Mette Fejfer
 Nina Boel
 Rasmus Stuhr Jakobsen
 Torben Huss
 Ulla Næsby Tawiah
 Vagn Berthelsen
 Tarek Kelani, observer (Chairperson in DFUNK)

From the Secretariat:

Charlotte Slente, Secretary General
 Vibeke Bach Madsen, secretary of the board
 Eva Grambye, Executive Director for Strategy,
 Programme & Learning, item 2
 Mads Sørensen, ED for People & Organization,
 item 3
 Nirvana Shawky, Executive Director for
 Partnership, Advocacy & External relations,
 item 4

Agenda, Thursday 14 November

Items		Comments
1) Welcome to the seminar and get-together / Carsten Stendevad		The aim of the seminar and informal discussions on the capacity of the Board and building the Board as a team.

Agenda, Friday 15 November

Items		Comments
2) Strategic discussions – towards Strategy 2030 / Charlotte Slente, Secretary General	Discussion and decision	Annex 2.0 Cover note Strategic discussions – towards Strategy 2030 Annex 2.1 Strategic ambition, Strategy 2030 Annex 2.2 Global Results 2023 Annex 2.3 Trends analysis from Strategy 2025 Annex 2.4 Strategy 2025 The Board will be informed about the status of the Strategy 2025 and the ambitions of the EMT regarding the 2030 strategy. The Board will be asked to approve the overall strategic ambitions for 2030: vision and breakthroughs. Furthermore, the Board will be presented with dilemmas and the hard choices given the intention to better prioritize and focus on the strategy going forward.

Items		Comments
3) The People side of DRC / Mads Sørensen, ED for People & Organization	Discussion	Annex 3.0 Cover note The People Side of DRC Annex 3.1 People and Talent Management Discussion note Annex 3.2 DRC Workforce presentation The Board has a strategic discussion of the people and talent management ambitions of DRC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRC's established ambition and strategy in this area • Achievements so far • Examples of DRC's work and challenges / dilemmas in this area
4) DRC Branding & Fundraising ambitions / Nirvana Shawky, ED for Partnership, Advocacy & External Relations	Discussion	Annex 4.0 Cover note DRC Branding & Fundraising ambitions Annex 4.1 Revitalization of DRC's brand Annex 4.2 Multi Markets fundraising strategy Annex 4.3 Institutional Donors – ambitions and direction The board has a strategic discussion of the branding and fundraising ambitions of DRC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRC's established ambition and strategy in this area • Achievements so far • Examples of DRC's work and challenges / dilemmas in this area
5) News from the DRC / Carsten Stendevad and Charlotte Slente	Briefing	
6) Recap and what now / Carsten Stendevad	Decision	Future actions will be determined based on the discussions at the seminar.

1) Welcome to DRC’s Board of Directors

The Chair, Carsten Stendevad, welcomed the participants to the annual seminar which offers the opportunity to have more in-depth strategic discussions.

Re 2) Strategic discussions – towards Strategy 2030

The following annexes were sent to the participants:

Annex 2.0 *Cover note Strategic discussions – towards Strategy 2030*

Annex 2.1 *Strategic ambition, Strategy 2030*

Annex 2.2 *Global Results 2023*

Annex 2.3 *Trends analysis from Strategy 2025*

Annex 2.4 *Strategy 2025*

Charlotte Slente, Secretary General, gave a status on the Strategy 2025 and presented the ambitions of the EMT regarding the 2030 strategy – based on an analysis of global trends relevant to DRC.

Status on Strategy 2025

As part of the status on Strategy 2025 Charlotte Slente gave a brief overview of how DRC is situated in the

wider aid system, as the overall identity, reputation, and positioning as a large international NGO intersects with how DRC practically implements the strategy and makes progress towards the ambitious goals laid forth at global, regional, and country levels.

At its core, DRC is perceived as a displacement organization, a humanitarian responder and a protection actor. This reflects DRC’s core identity in many ways, and there is an opportunity to build on our existing position even more: To strengthen DRC’s profile in displacement, leveraging capacities the organization already has. To become a stronger voice in the humanitarian system, capitalizing on our experienced, humanitarian engagement across the countries where DRC works. And to remain principled and drive international values and legal norms to further solidify the role as a foundational protection actor in a shrinking humanitarian space.

There are areas where DRC is working to strengthen and improve which include adapting and strengthening DRC’s role to meet the localization vision of the organization, to defining DRC’s space as both a humanitarian and a development / longer-term programming organization, and to mainstreaming DRC’s greening approach and response to the climate crisis.

These areas are strategic challenges that will carry through to the Strategy 2030 ambitions and approaches.

The DRC’s Strategy 2025 includes two overall strategic breakthroughs that define the impact DRC aims to have on people and communities affected by conflict and displacement, moving towards DRC’s Vision and Mission – the reason DRC does what it does. That strategic impact is,

- *Increased Protection, equal to others:* People affected by conflict and displacement must be able seek safety and claim basic rights.
In 2025, DRC aims to support (directly or indirectly) **15 million people** affected by conflict and displacement.
- *Enhanced Inclusion, on par with others:* People affected by conflict and displacement must be able to pursue self-reliance
In 2025, DRC aims to support (directly or indirectly) **13 million people** affected by conflict and displacement in pursuing self-reliance.

The status for 2023 is



In 2023, DRC recorded reaching 8.26 million individuals, compared to reported 19.18 million in 2022. As mentioned in the Annual Report 2023 the decrease in results is primarily from methodology refinement. From 2023 onwards, a refined approach to people reached figures is applied which excludes previously incorporated indirect reach through mass and digital media dissemination, protection information

management, or where indirect reach does not demonstrably contribute to other programme components. This reduces total figures compared to previous years.

In 2024 there has been a focus on 4 **Must Wins** to prioritize: Localization, Greening & Adaptation, Emergency response and Sustainable solutions and long-term programming, and this focus will continue in 2025.

Global trends towards 2030 relevant to DRC

The Strategy 2025 is based on a thorough trends analysis that is largely still valid looking towards Strategy 2030.

- **Displacement Trends**
Number of conflicts increases, prolonged displacement, displacement and humanitarian needs continue to increase.
- **Climate change**
The intense impact of climate change and environmental degradation felt by forcibly displaced is unmistakable and enduring.
- **International Humanitarian Law and Weakening Humanitarian System**
The erosion of norms and weakening of response mechanisms, amidst more complex conflicts.
- **The humanitarian financing gap is growing, and alternative sources are needed.**
- **Localization – within the entire humanitarian aid sector funding to local and national actors remain meager, and the call for locally-led programming rightly continues.**
- **Urban Displacement / Urbanization of displacement**
Urbanization is a worldwide phenomenon, and over 60% of refugees and 80% of Internally Displaced Persons now live in urban centers.
- **Youth**
We see the largest generation of young people in history and 90% of them reside in the Global South. This phenomenon has been referred to as the 'Youthquake'.

Strategy 2030

As the global trends continue and even seem to worsen it is suggested to transition towards Strategy 2030 standing on the ambitions from the Strategy 2025. In that sense it is not perceived there is a need for a disruptive strategy – rather a transformative and focused strategy.

Therefore, the Board has been asked to give mandate to the strategic direction based on the vision and breakthroughs in the Strategy 2025.

⇒ **Recap and conclusions:** *The Board of Directors expressed its thanks for the presentation and had a discussion reflecting on global trends and how this should and will affect the strategic direction for DRC.*

The Board gives its mandate for the strategic direction towards 2030 based on the vision and overall impact goals (the breakthroughs) acknowledging that it can be necessary to adjust the precise wording.

Regarding the process going forward, the Board will during the meetings in 2025 discuss the strategic direction before the expected approval in the September meeting 2025.

The Council will also discuss the strategic direction at the ordinary Council meeting in June.

Re 3) The People side of DRC

The following annexes were sent to the participants:

Annex 3.0 Cover note *The People Side of DRC*

Annex 3.1 *People and Talent Management Discussion note*

Annex 3.2 *DRC Workforce presentation*

Mads Sørensen, Executive Director for People & Organization, gave a presentation on the people side of DRC presenting an overview of the workforce, the People & Talent Management ambition and challenges.

Effective People & Talent Management is essential to achieving the organization's strategic objectives and sustaining DRC's humanitarian impact. There has been significant progress in becoming a more professional and structured organization, as well as positioning DRC as an attractive employer within the humanitarian sector. Despite these efforts there continues to be challenges in managing, developing and retaining the global workforce. These challenges, largely driven by unpredictable funding and the complexities of operating in volatile environments, are not unique to DRC and are generally present across the entire sector.

DRC's overarching ambition for People and Talent Management focuses on enhancing employee retention, engagement and accountability to ensure the organization is ready for current and future humanitarian challenges. This is pursued through four strategic targets: engaged employees, empowered leaders, an inclusive culture and increased accountability. These targets are backed by key initiatives aimed at improving workforce sustainability and operational resilience, while simultaneously addressing some of the major challenges that we face.

DRC is seen as an expert organization and is a very decentralized organization putting leadership and culture at the center. Focusing on fair reward and compensations, succession planning by diversifying talent pipelines and learning and development are other key factors.

One of the important KPI's within the people agenda is the ambition to have 50% national staff in all management positions. The organization is well above this target looking at all managers and close to target regarding senior management positions.

DRC is continuously following employee engagement via engagement surveys sent to all staff twice a year, followed by actions plans.

⇒ **Recap:** *The Board of Directors expressed its thanks for the presentation and had a discussion reflecting on people and talent management. It is key to attracting the talent needed for any organization where the employees are the most important resource. This is a discussion the Board should engage in on a regular basis.*

A key strategic area to follow is the localization agenda and how this will affect the People & Talent Management strategic direction. People & Organization is engaged in ongoing work on an operational model fit for these future scenarios.

Re 4) DRC Branding & Fundraising ambitions

The following annexes were sent to the participants:

Annex 4.0 Cover note *DRC Branding & Fundraising ambitions*

Annex 4.1 *Revitalization of DRC's brand*

Annex 4.2 *Multi Markets fundraising strategy*

Annex 4.3 *Institutional Donors – ambitions and direction*

Nirvana Shawky, Executive Director for Partnership, Advocacy & External Relations, gave a presentation on the branding and fundraising ambitions of DRC – the direction, achievements, and challenges for growth.

The Partnership, Advocacy & External Relations (PAER) department was established in 2023 to consolidate efforts to improve DRC's position as an influencing actor and dialogue partner with donors, political actors, policy makers and the humanitarian system as well as the public. This, both to influence the perception and treatment of refugees and displaced people, but certainly also to ensure the income required for DRC to fund our efforts to provide a dignified life to all displaced.

The drivers for the PAER's deliveries are growth, branding and influence – areas that are interlinked. The strategic priorities are

- Optimized partnership engagement
- Increased quality & flexible funding
- Improved ways of working
- Strengthened advocacy and communication

Diversification of funding streams

Within the areas of donors and foundations it is the overall strategic focus to diversify the revenue streams. The DRC representations in Berlin, Brussels and Geneva – and from 2025 in Washinton DC – plays an important role in prepositioning DRC for opportunities.

With the focus on engagement, prepositioning and partnership building it is the assessment that DRC has increased opportunities for growth.

The current landscape, though, shows a growing humanitarian funding gap and increased competition for funds. The latest and coming elections in many of the main donor countries make it unclear what this will mean for funding and focus areas of interest to DRC, especially regarding traditional institutional donors. So, DRC needs to be able to position itself and adapt – to speak into agendas to remain relevant and a partner of choice but without losing sight of the DRC core mandate. To add to this picture the localization agenda will affect INGOs like DRC.

Therefore, the diversification of funding streams – mass markets and philanthropy, global foundations and private sector are even more essential for DRC going forward.

Revitalizing the DRC brand

The DRC brand is rooted in our deep commitment to serve and support displaced persons and highly recognized among institutional donors and stakeholders in the NGO community. Worldwide, these efforts are being noticed, and since 2013 DRC has been ranked among the world's very best international humanitarian organizations, representing high quality impact – reinforcing our brand perception among stakeholders.

The DRC brand, though, doesn't resonate strongly enough in the public, the private sector, and among public influencers. With our strategic ambitions of being a leading displacement organization at the forefront and our increasing global presence in conflicts around the world, there is a need to re-vitalize our core brand identity.

This re-vitalization is not seen as a traditional, full-brand transformation. It will be a phased internal process corresponding to the DRC strategy making sure DRC is a strong, global brand with a clear and compelling master narrative and will be the point of departure of especially how DRC position itself to external stakeholders: Branding, communication, and fundraising activities across DRC accommodating Growth, Branding, and Influence.

⇒ **Recap:** *The Board of Directors expressed its thanks for the presentation and had a discussion reflecting on the branding and fundraising ambitions of DRC.*

From the Board there is strong support for the direction set, and the Board is eager to see the results – step by step.

Re 5) News from the DRC

- **Ali Al Mokdad is stepping down from the Board of Directors**

In light of the ongoing restructuring at HQ and the optimization within the FRISC department the role of Ali al Mokdad as Head of Policies, Processes and Tools will no longer continue as part of the organizational structure. Unfortunately, as a consequence and with no other relevant suitable opportunities available within DRC, Ali will conclude his tenure with the organization by the end of December 2025.

- **Restructuring DRC Head Quarters**

The Board was informed in October about a restructuring in DRC HQ.

This is the finalization of the organizational transformation that has been ongoing in the organization the last couple of years. The objectives that have been evaluated in the late spring of 2024 were to create a clearer framework for delivery services to our country offices, create clearer accountability, simplify our processes, and strengthen our global capacities.

- **Meetings with Member Organizations (MO) 13/11-2024**

The CEOs of the DRC Member Organizations who could not participate in the meetings mid-August have been invited for a meeting with Carsten and Charlotte 13 November.

This meeting was also very interesting and showed that the MOs see and acknowledge the role of DRC. Our work is inspirational and information from DRC is used by MO's.

- **Thematic Council meeting 13 November – Global trends relevant to DRC's work**

The Council was invited to reflect and discuss global trends a preparation for the coming strategy period. Secretary General Charlotte Slente gave a presentation on global trends relevant to DRC's work followed by group discussions and reflections.

- **Extension of the Priority Emergency in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) for three months**

The declaration of a Priority Emergency (PE) in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) has per 6 November been extended for three months. The emergency in Gaza continues due to the escalating conflict, which has intensified and expanded geographically. The humanitarian situation has worsened, while humanitarian actors are experiencing reduced access, increased restrictions, and a deteriorating operational environment.

Since May 2024, DRC has been actively engaged in the oPt through a partnership approach, working with local partners to expand its humanitarian response. The continued Israeli occupation compounds the protracted crisis in the region, resulting in severe humanitarian challenges. The situation has escalated since October 2023, with Israeli military offensives in Gaza and the West Bank unprecedented in magnitude, resulting in intensified humanitarian needs. DRC remains committed to saving lives and alleviating suffering in Gaza and the West Bank through a multi-sectoral response that prioritizes the needs of displaced Palestinians and employing conflict sensitive approaches.

- **Lebanon a Priority Emergency as per 30 September 2024**

Since the onset of Israeli bombardments end of September, the situation in Lebanon has rapidly deteriorated, resulting in approximately 2,036 casualties and more than 9,662 injuries, with 76% of these injuries occurring since September 16th. The hostilities have led to a significant displacement crisis, with the Government of Lebanon estimating up to 1.2 million internally displaced persons.

Additionally, more than 240,000 people, including Lebanese (30%) and Syrian refugees (70%), have crossed into Syria seeking safety. The humanitarian response is further complicated by restricted access to some affected areas and the rising cost of living, which has forced many displaced families into overcrowded and inadequate shelters.

- **Mixed Migration Centre, a part of DRC**

MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America, and a global team based across Copenhagen, Geneva and Brussels.

While MMC's institutional link to DRC ensures its work is grounded in operational reality, it acts as an independent source of data, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration for policy makers, practitioners, journalists, and the broader humanitarian sector.

MMC publishes a quarterly update on mixed migration trends and dynamics around the world and a global newsletter. One can subscribe to the newsletter here: [Home | Mixed Migration Centre](#).

Re 6) Recap and what now

The recap and decisions of the Board of Directors were noted under each of the agenda items.

Board meetings in 2024

Board/7 9 December

Board meetings in 2025

Board/1 Included in mission 18-23 February

Board/2 14 May

Board/3 25 June

Board/4 15 September

Board/5 8 December