

## Engaging Intergovernmental Organizations 2014

### Pioneer Fund – Trip Report

#### **Trip Report: Engaging Intergovernmental Organizations 2014 Program – March 22- 28, 2014, which took place in Paris, Geneva and Rome**

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**Executive Summary:** This year's Engaging Intergovernmental Organizations (EIO) program was took place March 22-28, 2014 in Paris, Geneva and Rome. The EIO program a week-long professional development program that is designed to provide participants (mid to late career government officials, academics, and private sector leaders) the opportunity to interact more effectively with intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). Our trip itinerary this year's program included site visits to 1) World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), Paris; 2) World Trade Organization (WTO), Geneva; 3) World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva; and 4) the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome. The program provides a variety of activities, speakers and networking opportunities that range from overviews of the organization to speed-networking to observing a WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures meeting. The diverse and interactive experiences, as well as a very comfortable, personal environment and face to face interaction facilitated effective engagement with key officials at the IGOs. The networks that were built from this program create a foundation for communication and knowledge exchange among participants and the IGO officials as well as potential partnerships

**Background:** The EIO program, now in its sixth year, provides a platform for interdisciplinary learning through site visits and engagement activities with key officials in animal health and public health, trade, food security and food safety at the four IGOs we visit. Participants have the opportunity to expand their professional networks with international leaders, develop potential collaboration opportunities, gain deeper knowledge on international standard-setting and global coordination, and increase institutional engagement.

#### **Trip Details –Key Points (agendas attached)**

The week started with a day of introductions (3/23) into the program, which involved overviews of the IGOs and also the history of how they interact together. The schedule and learning objectives were reviewed. We also had discussions on leadership, communication, networking, and engagement strategies. We broke up into groups as we were planning for the first sessions (OIE) and diving deeper into what we questions we had, and our goals. This provided an opportunity to meet and get to know other participants and prepare for the week.

### **OIE (3/24)**

The OIE day began with an introduction from the Director General, Dr. Bernard Vallet, who so eloquently spoke on the OIE. This introduction was further enhanced by several leaders at OIE who spoke on the overall organization, functions, programs (World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) and structure of OIE. We were also briefed on international standards that are set by OIE, the World Animal Health and Welfare Fund and projects funded. We (UMN/CMU Twinning Project) were invited to speak to provide an update of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) Twinning Program. Dean Khwanchi and myself presented together to both participants and OIE officials, providing overview of the Twinning project, our progress and partnership and future directions of this Twinning partnership. At each session (throughout EIO), we had plenty of time for question and answer. This was further enhanced by having the opportunity to have dinner with key personnel from each organization after the site visits.

### **WTO (3/25 (SPS Meeting), 3/27)**

On 3/25 we were invited to sit in and observe the Committee Meeting on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. We were first briefed by the Secretariat and reviewed the meeting agenda. The SPS is a two day meeting which includes representation from WTO member countries as they updated on countries concerns on imports, requirements and restrictions posed by countries, equivalence, updates on resolutions, and pathogen/disease-free updates.

On 3/27, we then were able to follow up with presentation by a representative (and former EIO participant) from Grenada who was speaking about her participation and what it is like representing her country. We then were briefed on the SPS Agreement in much more detail. An interactive learning activity which was conducted in groups and really gave us the opportunity to then dig into the SPS Agreement and make a decision of which scenario was correct and which was incorrect. Review of each of the statements from the exercise allowed us to gain a true appreciation for interpretation and application of these rules.

### **WHO (3/26)**

The WHO meeting began with a general overview and welcome from the Senior Adviser to the Director-General. We had the privilege of many dynamic speakers sharing on the broad spectrum of programs and work covered by WHO. Topics addressed included the International Health Regulations, Zoonoses, working at the human-animal-ecosystem interface, food safety and antimicrobial resistance. We had the very fantastic opportunity to visit the Strategic Health Operations Centre (SHOC), which is WHO's central emergency operations center used to facilitate and coordinate regional technical responses and operational mechanisms, logistics and technical support to control significant public health event. At the time of visit, SHOC was in operations due to the Ebola Outbreak in Guinea, and although there was no group in action at the operations center, it was interesting to hear a little bit about that

process. Our day concluded with dinner with WHO personnel and two of the interns currently at WHO, which afforded the opportunity to further network among participants and IGO colleagues.

### **FAO (3/28)**

The final day of the program was hosted at the FAO. The day included an overview of the structure and the objectives of FAO, of Food Safety and the Codex and a tour of the Crisis Management Center for Animal Health (CMC-AH) where FAO deals with emergency situations related to animal health. Two speed-networking sessions were organized. We (participants) were divided up into seven groups of three, each led by an FAO facilitator. These small groups then visited key FAO staff in their offices in different departments. Each group met six FAO staff for twenty minutes each. The program was even more valuable in that EIO participants and FAO staff were matched for their interests and professional backgrounds. It allowed us to meet with many different people and get a better understanding of their roles at FAO. It was a very relaxed and comfortable environment that really afforded the opportunity to effectively engage. They also joined us for lunch, and then a dinner which provided a more informal atmosphere to build these relationships.

### **Key Outcomes:**

- 1) WHO internship – developed a partnership with World Health Organization Neglected Tropical Diseases that I will use as part of an independent study for the MPH program. I will also use this as an opportunity to enhance my career network.
- 2) Networking within participants, many followed up on (email/linked in), and will continue. Have leveraged these networks already to connect participants to other in my network and several have done the same.
- 3) Networking with organization key members, many followed up on (email/linked in), and will continue. This has been really helpful also in navigating application to positions within the IGOs
- 4) Presentation in VPH Summer Rounds on IGO – I will be delivering a presentation for the VPH summer rounds on webinar format to describe the EIO program experience and share the knowledge I gained from participating with my fellow residents and faculty.
- 5) Opportunity to participate in a continued partnership meeting at the OIE with Alain Dehove (OIE), Will Hueston (UMN) and Dean Khwanchai (CMU). Presented some of our OIE Twinning updates at this meeting, as well as had the opportunity to observe partnership building and how to strategically set and move towards common goals. I took notes and synthesized a summary statement from this meeting to go back to OIE and participants.

6) Dinner with CMU faculty. I had the opportunity to have dinner with our partners from CMU Dean Khwanchai, and Dean Wipeda to discuss the potential of expanding partnerships. One of the topics we discussed was the interest in collaborating on the WHO NTD scoping project, in that NE Thailand has a high burden one of the diseases of focus for NTD and has strong research, laboratory and medical capacity, which could be a potential for a pilot site.

7) Participated in a meeting with FAO and UMN participants at EIO. This meeting was to discuss some of the opportunities for collaborations with UMN. Representation from UMN included CFANS, Raptor Center, Extension, and CAHFS/GIFSL.

### **Trip Details – Expense Report**

Through generous funding from the Pioneer Fund, I was able to participate in the EIO program. My travel dates were March 21-29, 2014. Through Pioneer Fund, I was able to cover \$2500 of my trip total (\$4400). I used the funds to cover the registration costs (\$925), my flight (\$1395.40) and part of my lodging (\$179.60). Costs beyond what the Pioneer Fund were covered by the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA, \$200), part of my career development fund and personal finances.

Registration Fee: This covers the course fee for 2014, which will include all train, air, and other ground transportation in Europe between destinations of Geneva, Paris and Rome, and the following: food service, welcome reception (Paris), three group dinners (Geneva, Paris, and Rome), one working lunch (Paris). It will also cover all course materials and instruction (\$925)

Travel Expenses: Transportation: this covers flight from MSP airport to Paris, France. It also covers the flight from Rome, Italy back to MSP. It covers shuttle transportation from home to MSP, and MSP to home, as well as airport transport in both Paris and Rome (shuttle, cab) (\$1445).

Room and board: Based on an average of the current per diem rates for Rome, Geneva and Paris, this would cover expenses based on the US Department of State Per Diem Rates. Room was shared with other participant to help defray lodging expenses. (\$685.94, my half)

Meals and incidentals: Based on an average of the current per diem rates for Rome, Geneva and Paris, this would cover expenses based on the US Department of State Per Diem rates, This covers the means and incidentals the remaining meals not covered by the registration fee. (\$1230.50)

Miscellaneous expenses: CISI Insurance required for all students that travel internationally, transaction fees for internal cash withdraw and bank card use for purchases (e.g. hotel) (\$50).