

Chair's report on Council meeting of 22 September 2006

All 11 trustees were present at this meeting. Also present were the Director (Barbara Stocking), the Director of the International Division (Penny Lawrence), the Directors of the Human Resources Division (Jane Cotton), the Finance and Information Services Division (John Shaw), the Campaigns and Policy Division (Phil Bloomer), the Trading Division (David McCullough), the Fundraising and Supporter Marketing Director (Edward Fox), the Regional Director for the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (Adam Leach), and the Policy and Trustees Officer (Anne Gornall).

This was the fifth meeting of Council's annual cycle for 2005/06.

1. The Director gave an update on recent events. These included:-

- Sitar-e-Eesar award by government of Pakistan to Oxfam International in recognition of work carried out during the earthquake.
- Book conference in Nottingham which demonstrated the professionalism of Oxfam's staff and volunteers in this area.
- Oxfam's work in Sudan.
- Oxfam's lobbying on Lebanon.
- Oxfam's work with the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR); it would be the first agency in the next peer review, covering organisations' accountability to their beneficiaries (particularly on humanitarian response).

2. Council had a discussion on economic justice, which was the first of four Oxfam International change goals under development. This goal had evolved via the Make Trade Fair campaign, the coffee campaign and the Doha development round. The central proposition was to ensure that globalisation was used to end poverty – something that could only happen if the benefits were shared and were sustainable e.g. in the context of climate change and its effect on poor people. Trustees raised a number of points which will be taken on board as the analysis is developed.

3. Council then considered the draft annual report and accounts 2005/06 prior to their submission to Oxfam's Annual General Meeting on 10 November 2006. The report was approved to go forward to the AGM. Trustees also reflected on two major developments during 2005/06 – the "I'm In" campaign and developing work on HIV/AIDS. Both had involved some new areas and initiatives for Oxfam. They were still evolving and building on the experience during the past year.

4. Two papers were presented by the Co-Chair of the Recruitment and Development Group (Angela Sealey). This group makes proposals to Council on the future membership of Oxfam's governance. The first paper outlined proposed appointments to Council and the Association which would go forward to the Annual General Meeting on 10 November, which were approved. The

second paper was the Recruitment and Development Group's Annual Report to Council. This included recommendations on the process for appointing a new Chair, the job description for the Vice-Chair, and renewal terms on Council which were agreed.

5. The Finance Director (John Shaw) presented the annual Control Assurance Report. This had previously been considered by the Trustee Audit and Finance Group together with a number of other papers e.g. the Internal Audit annual report and the external auditors' management letter. The Honorary Treasurer Designate (Gareth Davies) advised that issues of control needed to be considered as part of a bigger picture in Oxfam which included related issues such as programme quality. The agenda of the group in 2007 would be organised in tandem with the work of other groups e.g. the Programme Review Committee.
6. The Regional Director for the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (Adam Leach) made a presentation to Council. This highlighted issues across the region which was large and diverse. However, there were significant links which could increase the scope for impact across the whole e.g. on the nature of governance and the importance of citizenship. Trustees reflected in particular on Oxfam's programme in Russia which had been authorised by Council in 2002 and was now well established. They agreed that the programme did not now need specific Council approval and should be handled via the normal management and strategic processes in Oxfam.
7. There was also considerable discussion around the recent events in the Middle East e.g. Lebanon and work on lobbying with colleagues in Oxfam International. Council expressed support for the position taken by Oxfam GB.
8. Leading on from the discussion on economic justice (see above), Council received an update on the work being carried out on all the four Oxfam International change goals which were part of a powerful strategic planning process across the Oxfam family. They also expressed appreciation for the visit carried out the previous day to the Oxfam International offices, and the meetings with staff there which had been most informative.
9. Finally Council agreed a resolution on the registration of Oxfam in Chile and received an update from the recent meeting of the Remuneration Committee (which determines the remuneration packages for Directors, and also recommends and monitors the Reward policy which is the basis for all salary negotiations in Oxfam).

Rosemary Thorp
Chair