

## Chair's report on Council meeting of 2 February 2007

The following people were present at the meeting:-

<i>Trustees</i>	<i>Corporate Management and Staff</i>
John Gaventa (Chair)	Barbara Stocking (Director)
Maureen Connelly	John Shaw (Finance & Information Services Director)
Gareth Davies	Jane Cotton (Human Resources Director)
Sandra Dawson	Penny Lawrence (International Director)
Jackie Gunn	Phil Bloomer (Campaigns & Policy Director)
Andy Friend	David McCullough (Trading Director)
Frank Kirwan	Cathy Ferrier (Fundraising & Supporter Marketing Director)
Adebayo Olukoshi	Judith Robertson (Head of Oxfam in Scotland)
Angela Sealey	Joss Saunders (Company Secretary)
Richard Taylor	Anne Gornall (Policy and Trustees Officer)

This was the first meeting of Council's annual cycle for 2006/07 and took place in Glasgow after a number of visits to the programme in Scotland and meetings with partners. The Chair thanked Judith Robertson and the staff of Oxfam in Scotland for welcoming Oxfam's Council and for organising such an effective programme on the previous day. He also welcomed the two new trustees (Sandra Dawson and Andy Friend).

1. The meeting opened with a reflection on the Scotland programme visits. These had taken place with a number of partners in Glasgow – the Glasgow Braendam Link, Winealley, Tea in the Pot, Sunny Govan radio, the Roars not Whispers project, livelihoods work in Clydebanks, Asylum Positive Images Network and a Migrant Worker Network meeting (Community InfoSource). One group of trustees and staff had also visited the Scottish Development Education Centre (Scotdec) and the International Development Education Association for Scotland (IDEAS). Another group had visited the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, to include a session with Jubilee Scotland (the Scottish body of the global debt campaign) and a meeting with two members of the Scottish parliament who have a particular focus on international development (Sylvia Jackson and Linda Fabiani).

Trustees and the Corporate Management Team observed that the visits reflected the breadth of Oxfam's engagement, the tangible benefits of a gender-based approach, and partners' appreciation for the support being given by Oxfam. There was a wide spectrum of activity in Scotland and at all levels there was interest in developing and strengthening global links. People were also being encouraged to speak up and to address their problems. The key area where Oxfam could help was to bring the voice of the poor to the table in Scotland.

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

- Progress made on debt relief and on restarting trade talks at the World Economic Forum, Davos – along with the high profile given to climate change. It was encouraging that the focus was shifting to the impact of climate change on people, and particularly poor people.

- The difficult security situation for international agencies operating in Darfur. Oxfam was providing water and sanitation to over 400,000 people; the programme was well managed under challenging conditions.
  - Some key changes in senior management which was delivering considerable drive and energy for new and ongoing work.
3. Council considered a number of papers arising from the Oxfam International Board meeting in November 2006. These included papers on governance standards and India (which were endorsed) together with papers on accountability and identity which were noted and would be discussed further in July 2007.
  4. Trustees then had a session of learning and reflection arising from a number of papers around the Tsunami in late 2004 and Oxfam's response. These included an evaluation, a management review, and a report of a trip to Aceh and Nias by the Chair and Director (John Gaventa and Barbara Stocking) in late 2006. A number of points were raised, both in terms of Oxfam's response and to the wider response by NGOs. These included issues around scale, risk and the kind of needs that were likely to arise e.g. construction. Trustees expressed appreciation for the good work which had been done both in the field and in Oxford. The evaluation is available on the website:-

[http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/emergencies/how\\_we\\_work/tsunamireport.htm](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/emergencies/how_we_work/tsunamireport.htm)

5. As this was the first meeting of the cycle – and the first meeting with the new Chair (John Gaventa) - trustees carried out the annual review of Council. They agreed a number of points to improve the running of Council and to make best use of trustees' time.
6. Council approved Oxfam's membership of the Fundraising Standards Board, and amended terms of reference for the Recruitment and Development Group. The group reports to Council and covers the recruitment to Oxfam's governance together with the training and development of its members.
7. Updates were provided on pensions (prior to a more in depth discussion at Council in April 2007) and on the provisions of the Charities Act 2007.
8. Finally there was an evaluation of the meeting – particularly on the agenda, timing and balance of items. The discussion on the Tsunami and Oxfam's response was felt to have been particularly useful. Particular appreciation was again expressed for the organisation and arrangements made by the staff of Oxfam in Scotland.

John Gaventa  
Chair