

## Chair's report on Council meeting of 27 April 2007

The following people were present at the meeting:-

### *Trustees*

John Gaventa (Chair)  
Maureen Connelly  
Gareth Davies  
Sandra Dawson  
Andy Friend  
Frank Kirwan  
Norman Sanson  
Angela Sealey  
Richard Taylor  
Stan Thekaekara

### *Corporate Management and Staff*

Barbara Stocking (Director)  
John Shaw (Finance & Information Services Director)  
Jane Cotton (Human Resources Director)  
Penny Lawrence (International Director)  
Phil Bloomer (Campaigns & Policy Director)  
David McCullough (Trading Director)  
Cathy Ferrier (Fundraising & Supporter Marketing Director)  
Anne Gornall (Policy and Trustees Officer)

Apologies were received from Jackie Gunn and Adebayo Olukoshi.

This was the second meeting of Council's annual cycle for 2006/07 and took place in Oxford.

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

- Work with Oxfam Germany on the run up to the 2007 G8 annual summit. This included an analysis of the Gleneagles commitments from the 2006 G8 and a push to ensure that these commitments were delivered.
- Help to Oxfam Japan to prepare for the 2008 G8 annual summit.
- Two key papers on foreign policy which had generally been well received. These were 'A Fair Foreign Policy' and 'Poverty in Palestine: the human cost of the financial boycott'.
- The Oxfam appeal for Darfur and Chad. Penny Lawrence (International Director) advised that in Darfur water and sanitation was being provided to c. 500,000 people.
- Upcoming meetings in New York – including her work as the representative of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) on the inter-agency standing committee of the United Nations. This would look at the humanitarian reform process in the UN and building a new relationship with the UN on the ground.
- An upcoming meeting in Rome with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Oxfam was liaising with the FAO and with the World Food Programme e.g. on issues such as enabling people to buy food so as to keep local farmers in business.
- Preparation for the Oxfam International Executive Directors' meeting in France.

2. Following agreement of the Oxfam GB strategic plan in November 2006, Council considered a proposal on tracking progress and learning. Some suggestions were made and it was agreed that the approach would be taken forward by a programme working group together with the Chair, Honorary Treasurer, the Director and the Corporate Management Team.
3. Council approved the 2007/08 annual plan (i.e. the objectives and the budget) which had been analysed in some depth by the Trustee Audit and Finance Group. The plan was generally felt to be robust, though ongoing prioritisation of objectives was important.
4. Council then approved the organisational risk register for 2007/08 which again had been scrutinised by the Trustee Audit and Finance Group. Members recognised that there were areas where Oxfam was inevitably exposed to a fairly high level of risk, but this was being managed.
5. Julie Wood (the new Director of Corporate Communications) and Rachael Clay (Head of Strategy Development and Marketing Intelligence) made a presentation. This covered work with a range of Oxfam stakeholders and the wider public to understand how Oxfam was perceived. It included some analysis of Oxfam supporters and reflections on issues such as accountability. Trustees acknowledged that there was more work to do in order to incorporate input from Oxfam's beneficiaries. As a first step they looked forward to the strategic evaluation of Oxfam's international partnerships which would be available in July.
6. Francisco Roque, the Regional Director for South America, then joined the meeting by video link for the following two items:-
  - a. A discussion on Oxfam's developing private sector strategy. This discussion included input from Sam Bickersteth (Head of the Programme Policy Team) and Nicola Day (Private Sector Strategy Co-ordinator). The discussion included experience from Oxfam's work in South America and acknowledged the need to feed in learning from a number of other countries e.g. China and India. Trustees acknowledged the need for a careful, deliberate approach in order to maximise opportunities to reduce poverty and suffering.
  - b. A presentation and discussion on the context and focus of Oxfam's work in South America. Francisco explained that the vision of the programme was for people in South America to exercise their rights and to be instrumental in the construction of inclusive societies. Trustees acknowledged the changing context for Oxfam's work in some countries e.g. Bolivia, and observed that there was much to be learned about participative governance in South America. They thanked Francisco for analysing recent developments in South America and for demonstrating the benefits of Oxfam's long term engagement in the region.
7. Council noted the Company Secretary's Eighth Annual Report on the Trustee Code of Conduct and approved a proposal that Association members on Council sub-committees should also complete the register. A resolution on a cotton farmers marketing company in India was also approved.

8. Updates were given on a number of issues. These included pensions, publication of information on the Oxfam website, and a trip by Barbara Stocking and Adebayo Olukoshi to Yemen. Various information papers were also noted.
9. Trustees then paid tribute to Frank Kirwan who was standing down as a trustee at this meeting. Frank was thanked for his contribution as Oxfam's Honorary Treasurer 2000-2006. He had introduced a much greater rigour in the areas of control and risk, and was leaving a real legacy on which others could build. Frank paid tribute to his fellow trustees – both the calibre of the people on Council and the quality of debate at the meetings.
10. Finally there was an evaluation of the meeting to inform future meeting and agenda planning.

John Gaventa  
Chair

Date: 13 July 2007