

Chair's report on Council meeting of 12/13 July 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)
Andy Friend	Penny Lawrence (International Director)
Adebayo Olukoshi	Phil Bloomer (Campaigns & Policy Director)
Norman Sanson	Cathy Ferrier (Fundraising & Supporter Marketing Director)
Angela Sealey	Becky Buell, Senior Adviser, Strategy and Innovation
Richard Taylor	Anne Gornall (Policy and Trustees Officer)
Stan Thekaekara	

Apologies were received from Sandra Dawson and Jackie Gunn.

This was the third meeting of Council's annual cycle for 2006/07 and took place in Oxford. The main purpose of the meeting was to consider how Oxfam should evolve with a view to 2020. In particular trustees considered the future of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and what it means to be global.

On the evening of Thursday 12 July, Council held a seminar and considered presentations and papers from two external speakers (Jan Art Scholte from Warwick University and Srilatha Batlawala from the Hauser Centre, Harvard University). Both the speakers raised issues about global governance institutions, alternative paradigms and the need for agility to respond to a greater pace of change and degree of unpredictability. Being international was not only about location.

The discussion continued on Friday 13 July and included a number of policy staff and research staff together with the Pan Africa Policy Adviser and the Diversity Adviser.

A reflection document was subsequently produced. This summarises the discussion and offers a framework for continued reflection and dialogue across Oxfam, and with partners and external contacts. There are sections on key changes in the environment, key uncertainties, the (ir)relevance of INGOs, new horizon issues for INGOs, current directions in Oxfam GB and the evolution of the next generation INGO.

The strategic discussion was followed by a number of programme and business items as follows:-

1. *Partnership evaluation and policy*

Trustees acknowledged that the recent partnership evaluation was an important and quality piece of work; it had been owned and welcomed by both staff and partners. Council also considered and approved a partnership policy which had been developed in tandem with the evaluation. The policy outlines the values and principles underpinning Oxfam's approach to working with others. The implementation of the policy and learning from the review will be monitored, with a progress report coming back to Council in 2009.

2. *Draft accountability report*

Council considered an early draft of an overarching report on accountability. The purpose of the report was to clarify Oxfam's principles in certain areas and also in the context of a variety of British and international codes of conduct. Trustees agreed that further work was needed, firstly to absorb some of the issues into the statutory Annual Report and Accounts, and secondly to develop a statement of accountability principles and the areas covered. A second draft of the report will return to Council in November 2007.

3. *Oxfam Logo*

Trustees agreed to consider a paper on the use of Oxfam's logo. The proposal was for the logo to be used without a country suffix in the context of Oxfam International humanitarian and campaigning work. The paper was subsequently circulated in August 2007 and it was agreed that the logo could be used in this way.

4. *Trustee trips to West Africa and Yemen*

Reports on these trips were received and introduced by the relevant trustees (Richard Taylor and Adebayo Olukoshi). Both members confirmed that their visits had highlighted some important issues and enhanced their understanding of Oxfam's programme.

5. *Other business items*

Trustees received updates on the development of a Council Intranet team room, proposed trustee visits to Oxfam shops in August and September, and arrangements for the Trading presentation before the September Council meeting. They were also updated on drafts and work in hand on the Annual Report and Accounts 2006/07 and the Strategic Steer 2008-09 to 2010-11.

The meeting closed with an evaluation to inform future meeting and agenda planning.

John Gaventa
Chair

Date: 28 September 2007