

## Chair's report on Council meeting of 28 September 2007

The following people were present at the meeting:-

### *Trustees*

John Gaventa (Chair)  
Maureen Connelly  
Gareth Davies  
Sandra Dawson  
Andy Friend  
Adebayo Olukoshi  
Norman Sanson  
Angela Sealey  
Richard Taylor

### *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)  
Cathy Ferrier (Fundraising & Supporter Marketing Director)  
David McCullough (Trading Director)  
Anne Gornall (Policy and Trustees Officer)

Apologies were received from Jackie Gunn and Stan Thekaekara.

This was the fourth 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:-

- Oxfam's response to the floods in Africa. While these had recently been publicised, Oxfam had been involved for a couple of months.
- Visit to Darfur and Chad by eight women leaders, and an update on Oxfam's work in Darfur.
- Recent work in the Middle East e.g. advocacy work on the situation for ordinary people in Gaza and an upcoming report on the position of women in Iraq.
- Ongoing work to finalise the constitutional arrangements for Oxfam India (which was in the process of being established and would probably join the Oxfam family in 2008).
- A proposed peer review of the governance structures across the Oxfams. This was scheduled to take place in early 2008.
- Oxfam's work on the humanitarian accountability project and in a multi agency peer review through the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response.
- Media coverage for Oxfam's work in Darfur and on climate change.

2. As the first of six scheduled reviews of the strategic plan, the Directors of the Trading Division (David McCullough) and the Supporter Marketing Division (Cathy Ferrier) gave presentations to Council. These included an explanation of Oxfam's fundraising model and the UK external environment, the IT system which would help to enable a more varied relationship between supporters and Oxfam, and an update on the *I'm In* campaign. They demonstrated that many supporters had a range of relationships with Oxfam. These could take in a range of activities e.g. campaigning, the shops, Christmas cards and *Oxfam Unwrapped*.

Trustees reflected on what they had been told. They expressed appreciation for the support that was already given to Oxfam by a range of people, while at the same time acknowledging that there was considerable potential to deepen the relationship in many cases. They also felt that new supporters could be invited to engage with Oxfam in number of different and often innovative ways.

3. Council then considered the draft annual report and accounts for 2006/07 prior to their submission to Oxfam's Annual General Meeting on 23 November 2007. The report was approved to go forward to the AGM. Following the recent death of the Chair Emeritus (Michael Rowntree), it was agreed that the Chair would make an additional statement in the annual report to pay tribute to Michael Rowntree's contribution to Oxfam over nearly 60 years.
4. Paul Smith-Lomas, the Regional Director for Oxfam GB's Horn, East and Central Africa region, made a presentation on the challenges of working in conflict and post-conflict zones. This concentrated particularly on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), South Sudan and Somalia. In tandem with this, Sandra Dawson reported on her recent trustee trip to South Sudan which echoed many of Paul's observations on working in fragile states. Trustees expressed appreciation to Paul and Sandra for highlighting the context for Oxfam's work in this region together with the potential to make an impact in some key areas e.g. community development and empowerment.
5. Council approved proposed appointments to Council and the Association to go forward to the AGM on 23 November 2007. Two Council sub-groups (the Recruitment and Development Group and the Remuneration Committee) then presented their annual reports. The Recruitment and Development Group is concerned with recruitment to Oxfam's governance together with the induction and training of its members. The Remuneration Committee monitors the implementation of Oxfam's Reward policy and determines the remuneration packages for Oxfam's senior management.
6. In preparation for the AGM, the Company Secretary (Joss Saunders) proposed some resolutions to go forward to the AGM on 23 November 2007 together with a proposed debate at the Association meeting on the same date with regard to further proposed constitutional changes. The 2007 changes are a change to the objects to include "the prevention or relief" of poverty, and the amendment of the Memorandum to comply with Scottish charity law.
7. Finally Council considered an initial proposal on the future of the Oxfam Assembly. Trustees agreed not to hold an Assembly in 2008, but to consider further proposals on alternatives to the Assembly. These will be considered at the Council meeting in February 2008.

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

John Gaventa  
Chair