

## Chair's report on Council meeting of 24 April 2009

The following people were present at the meeting:-

<i>Trustees</i>	<i>Corporate Management and Staff</i>
John Gaventa (Chair)	Barbara Stocking (Chief Executive)
Maureen Connelly	John Shaw (Finance & Information Services Director)
Maja Daruwala	Jane Cotton (Human Resources Director)
Gareth Davies	Penny Lawrence (International Director)
Sandra Dawson	Phil Bloomer (Campaigns & Policy Director)
Andy Friend	Cathy Ferrier (Fundraising & Supporter Marketing Director)
Vanessa Godfrey	David McCullough (Trading Director)
Adebayo Olukoshi	Joss Saunders (Company Secretary)
Richard Taylor	Anne Gornall (Policy and Trustees Officer)

Apologies were received from Matthew Martin and Stan Thekaekara.

This was the second meeting of Council's annual cycle for 2008/09 and took place in Oxford.

Following the discussion at the February Council meeting, trustees received an update on the establishment of Just Energy (People's Power). A further update would be provided for the July Council meeting.

Trustees were also updated on further developments and discussions following the BBC decision not to broadcast a Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal earlier in the year.

The Chief Executive then shared some recent events, including:-

- Her recent visit to Zimbabwe. She reflected on peoples' hopes for change after the establishment of the Government of National Unity. Oxfam was helping with seeds, tools and fertilisers, and planning for a year of simultaneous humanitarian and recovery work.
- Assistance being provided by Oxfam GB on the establishment of Oxfam India.
- Developments since Oxfam and twelve other NGOs had been asked to leave Sudan on 4 March 2009. These included support to partners and other NGOs, and ongoing efforts to enable humanitarian needs to be met. Penny Lawrence commended the bravery of staff, both those who had been evicted and those who remained to work where possible with partners.
- The Climate Change/Here and Now Campaign which had been launched the previous day (23 April).

Council then considered a paper on the proposed Oxfam International single management structure in countries. These continued from a discussion at a seminar the previous day with input from the Chief Executive of Care International (Geoffrey Dennis). Trustees endorsed the thrust so far of the work and its the key purpose of which was to make a more effective use of resources. In addition to identifying the importance of trust and an effective governance in Oxfam International, Oxfam GB acknowledged a duty of care to build and maintain a global movement, to grow the capacity of other Oxfams to manage in countries, and to work with others to build the capacity of all Oxfam affiliates.

In the same context, Council also considered a paper on Oxfam International review of ownership and use of the name 'Oxfam'. This was closely linked to the work on single management structures and the overall strengthening of governance.

Barbara Stocking presented the 2009/10 annual plan (i.e. the objectives and the budget). She pointed out that the key difference going forward to 2009/10 was the effect of the current recession and planning for the probable implementation of the Oxfam International single management structure. Following some reductions in staffing in the UK, some cuts were planned for the international programme; most of these would be implemented in 2010/11. After some further updates on the implications of compulsory severance payments to staff in Sudan and the latest valuation of the final salary pension scheme, the annual plan was approved.

Council then considered a new organisational risk register. This had been prepared both in the context of the previous register but also to take on board a fresh consideration of the key risks. They requested some changes to the wording, and authorised Honorary Officers to approve the final register, which would come to Council in July as an information paper.

Trustees reviewed the following issues and papers:-

- The third quarterly report for 2008/09, including an update on health and safety issues.
- Issues arising from the Trustee Audit and Finance Group meeting on 3 April, most of which had fed into the discussion of the annual plan and risk register.
- A post implementation review on CRIMSON (the system which now manages all Oxfam's information on donors and contracts for restricted funding).
- A first review of Oxfam's counter terrorism strategy. This would be reviewed again in 2011, initially by the Trustee Audit and Finance Group.
- The annual report on the Trustee Code of Conduct and register, which was approved.
- A paper recommending the appointment of Fiona Hodgson to the Association of Oxfam. Again this was approved.

Finally the Vice-Chair and Co-Chair of the Recruitment and Development Group (Vanessa Godfrey) updated Council on work to refine the job description for Oxfam's Chair and associated changes to Oxfam's articles in preparation for the appointment of a new Chair at the 2011 Annual General Meeting. Council was also updated on the Trustee/Corporate Management team for Trailwalker in 2009 (named 'Any Other Business'), where training and fundraising were going well.

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

John Gaventa  
Chair