

## Chair's report on Council meeting of 16 March 2012

The following people were present at the meeting:-

<i>Trustees</i>	<i>Corporate Management and Staff</i>
Karen Brown (Chair)	Barbara Stocking (Chief Executive)
James Darcy	Bob Humphreys (Finance & Information Services Director)
Sandra Dawson	Jane Cotton (Human Resources Director)
Andy Friend	Phil Bloomer (Campaigns & Policy Director)
Vanessa Godfrey	Andrew Horton (Trading Director)
Matthew Martin	Penny Lawrence (International Director)
Rajiv Joshi	Anne Gornall (Trustees Officer)
David Pitt-Watson	Tim Brown (Trustees and CMT Administrator)
Nkoyo Toyo	
Tricia Zipfel	

Apologies were received from Maja Daruwala and Marjorie Scardino. The Chair welcomed Sioned Jones (Acting Director of Fundraising and Supporter Marketing Division). This was the second meeting of Council's annual cycle for 2011/12 and took place in Oxford.

### *Chief Executives Report*

In her regular update to trustees, Barbara Stocking and members of Oxfam's management team covered the following key areas:

#### *General*

Barbara Stocking, Phil Bloomer and Jane Cotton gave details about the following:-

- The nomination of the Control Arms campaign for the Nobel Peace Prize. This was reflecting its work over ten years on controlling arms by the coalition of Oxfam, Amnesty International, and IANSA.
- Outcomes from the most recent staff survey, reflecting the ongoing commitment of Oxfam staff.

#### *Humanitarian*

*Africa:* Momentum was now growing on the West Africa food crisis and there had been some important media coverage. Penny Lawrence gave details of her recent trip to Mali. She had observed learning from the 2010 food crisis together with innovative cash programming to help people move away from the need for food aid. Phil Bloomer advised that experiences in East and West Africa were feeding into the key messages in the GROW campaign (i.e. dependence on food markets).

*Certification of NGOs:* Barbara Stocking advised work on a system for certification of international NGOs was going ahead, and it was hoped that it may be part funded by DFID and Swissaid. This builds on the work of organisations like HAP and People in Aid, and develops common quality standards for development work, especially in emergencies.

#### *Development*

*Private sector:* Barbara Stocking updated Council on conversations at the World Economic Forum in Davos. It was clear that the private sector had an expanding role in developing countries and smallholder agriculture, and that more direct partnering would take place in Oxfam's work in programme countries. In Oxfam this was already being reflected with two new regional appointments on the Enterprise Development Programme.

#### *Campaigning*

*GROW Campaign/Land Grabs:* Phil Bloomer updated trustees on the Uganda case. The difficulties faced by communities in many countries had led to a proposal that Oxfam should call for a moratorium on land grabs. Trustees thought this was worth considering.

*UK:* Barbara Stocking gave details of work within the UK-wide food and hunger campaign to explain what development aid is being used for, and the wider structural issues on food. She gave details of the UK government's plans so far relating to World Population Day 11 July. Oxfam and others wanted the message for the day to focus on women's reproductive rights.

#### *Trading*

*Marks & Spencer (M&S):* Andrew Horton outlined the developing relationship with M&S, plus an initiative planned for the spring. This would be based more broadly around swapping clothes (used clothes when buying new M & S clothes), and had considerable potential for Oxfam.

*The Big Bra Hunt:* Barbara Stocking and Andrew Horton gave details of Oxfam's initiative to attract donations of bras, and also publicise the work of Wastesaver and Frip Ethique.

#### *Organisational issues*

*Vacancies on Corporate Management Team (CMT):* Barbara Stocking advised that interviews had taken place for the Communications Director, but no appointment had been made on the first round. Candidates for the Supporter Marketing Director vacancy had been longlisted, and interviews would take place in early April.

#### *Oxfam International (OI) Board 23/24 March 2012*

*OI strategic plan:* The Chair welcomed Kate Wareing (Strategy Development Manager). Kate explained where we currently are on the planning timeline for the 2013-2019 Oxfam International Strategic Plan. The March OI Board meeting would be looking to agree and provide a steer on various aspects of the strategic plan. Kate Wareing also updated trustees on the developing discussions on the role, shape and form of OI in the future, using the 2008 OI Growth Strategy as a starting point.

Trustees discussed a number of points, including the importance of the strategy bringing about a step-change in what we do, and the need to bring together the language across affiliates on resilience and reducing vulnerability, making sure it is reflected in the programme side as well as campaigns.

*Other key issues going to the Oxfam International Board:* The Chair updated Council on OI governance appointments, new affiliates, the OI risk register, and OI governance proposals.

#### *Draft Annual Plan 2012/13*

Barbara Stocking introduced the annual plan, highlighting the key issues for the year, including influencing the debate on growth, well-being and a resource-constrained world, continuing to deliver the GROW campaign, and becoming more cost-effective in the UK. The Honorary Treasurer (David Pitt-Watson) advised that the Trustee Audit and Finance Group (TAFG) were pleased to approve the plan, and recommended it to Council.

#### *Organisational Risk Register*

The Chair welcomed Sagar Dave, Head of Internal Audit, for the discussion. Bob Humpheys explained that the discussion needed to take place in tandem with the annual plan, but would also inform discussion of Oxfam's Annual Report and Accounts in July. The Trustee Audit and Finance Group (TAFG) had looked at this register and would also look at the divisional risk registers which underpinned it. Risks from humanitarian work were part of the International Division risk register. TAFG had approved the register going forward to Council but recommended that trustees should reflect on how risk-averse or risk-courageous they would wish to be.

The Honorary Treasurer said it would be useful to share with Council a TAFG paper which identified issues around finance, control and personnel. It was important that trustees should feel comfortable about systems in place or being developed. Council expressed satisfaction that, within the constraints of what was possible and affordable, Oxfam had the right level of risk and the risks were acceptable.

#### *Development Board*

Trustees and CMT felt that the experience to date with the Development Board had demonstrated this particular model and way of working might not be Oxfam's forte. However, some excellent relationships had developed from the original concept and would be carried forward.

#### *Council Review*

The Chair thanked trustees and CMT for their input, which had demonstrated the ongoing constructive partnership between governance and management. Trustees then discussed the lead member role, and the Council forward schedule.

The meeting then moved on to the business and governance items on the main agenda, as follows:

- Issues that had been discussed at the TAFG meeting on 2 March, including an update on the Small Enterprise Impact Investing Fund (SEIIF).
- Council received the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarterly report.
- Updates on trustee and Association recruitment in 2012.

The Chair then advised that the next meeting would be on Thursday/Friday 12/13 July 2012.

Karen Brown  
Chair