

Chair's report on Council meeting of 11/12 October 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)
Maja Daruwala	Phil Bloomer (Campaigns & Policy Director)
Sandra Dawson	Jane Cotton (Human Resources Director)
Andy Friend	Chris Gottlieb (Communications Director)
Vanessa Godfrey	Andrew Horton (Trading Director)
Matthew Martin	Paul Clarke (Fundraising and Supporter Marketing Director)
Rajiv Joshi	Penny Lawrence (International Director)
David Pitt-Watson	Bob Humphreys (Finance and Information Services Director)
Marjorie Scardino	Gavin Stewart (Trustee Designate)
	Steve Walton (Trustee Designate)
	Joss Saunders (Company Secretary)
	Anne Gornall (Trustees Officer)

Apologies were received from James Darcy, Nkoyo Toyo and Tricia Zipfel.

Strategic Discussions on the Oxfam International (OI) Strategic Plan

Council discussed Oxfam GB's proposed priorities, as regards contribution towards the over-arching OI Strategic Plan. This involved the criteria for decision making, and the priorities themselves. Subject to consideration of Council's comments, it was agreed that the right decisions had been made thus far.

Chief Executives Report

Barbara Stocking noted the request from trustees to have more information about programme and policy, either in this report or as part of Council meetings. This would be built into the planning for 2013 which would include the attendance of Regional Directors at specified meetings.

Humanitarian

South Sudan: Penny Lawrence spoke about her recent visit to South Sudan, an extreme example of the challenges that Oxfam addresses throughout the programme, i.e. poverty, vulnerability etc. There were good, long-term staff there, but a need for more leadership and technical capability for humanitarian response. These issues would be addressed in the longer term via capacity building of local staff and increased technical support and training, alongside work with other agencies in the country.

Campaigning

Upcoming campaigns: Barbara Stocking gave details of Oxfam GB's Food for All communications focus (launching Boxing Day 2012), and the joint campaign of UK development agencies (launching 18 January 2013). The joint campaign is titled 'Enough Food For Everyone, If...', and will run for 9 months. One of its major themes will be land, a key component of the longer-term Oxfam International 'GROW' campaign.

Land freeze campaign: Phil Bloomer advised that the recent launch of this campaign had gone well. It was particularly fortunate that there was now a constructive dialogue with the World Bank on social justice issues which had helped to push things forward.

Arms Trade Treaty: While this had been vetoed at the final stage by countries including the United States, Oxfam and others would continue to push forward to the next vote in March 2013.

UK Government: Barbara Stocking gave details of recent meetings with Justine Greening, the new Secretary of State for DFID.

Fundraising

Street fundraising: Andrew Barton (Head of Relationship Marketing) and Paul Clarke gave details of where street fundraising fitted in the wider portfolio of Oxfam's fundraising. It was recognised that this was seen as controversial by some people. Council were informed that there is now a very clear complaint monitoring process, together with regular, open and responsive reviews of process.

Oxfam's brand: Chris Gottlieb updated Council on popular perceptions of management and development. This showed a particularly positive response to framing the issues as visionary, empowering and changing lives, rather

than 'fighting'. Research indicates it is more effective to emphasize our practical work and achievements, rather than more aspirational statements like the desire to end poverty. Council would be asked to give a final steer in January.

Eight Stories High, Sunday 14 October: Barbara Stocking gave details about the upcoming event at the Oxford Playhouse. This aimed to combine entertainment with an Oxfam message.

Oxfam International (OI) – October Board meeting and other issues

The Chair referred Council to papers outlining the important discussions around the developing strategic plan, the financial health of the confederation, and succession planning. Council welcomed the appointment of Nitin Desai as the incoming Chair of OI.

The Chair also updated Council on the initial proposals of the Oxfam International governance working group, for a structure separating trustee governance from executive governance and comprising a Board of Supervisors, and an Executive group. The Oxfam International October Board had accepted this in principle and now further questions would be addressed before a new structure is formally proposed.

Other matters

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

- Issues that had been discussed at the Trustee Audit and Finance Group (TAFG) meeting on 28 September, including the TAFG Annual Report and Annual Control Assurance Report, and Organisational Risk Register. The Honorary Treasurer also explained the recommendation to delay an audit tender for another two to three years.
- Council noted the first quarterly report for 2012/13, including Health and Safety.
- Bob Humphreys introduced the first annual complaints report, which trustees welcomed as a step forward in terms of governance and accountability.
- Health and Safety / Security Annual Report: as lead trustee for Health and Safety, Vanessa Godfrey commended the improvement with regard to incident reporting. She underlined the need to ensure Health and Safety remained a key priority.
- Recruitment and Development Group (RADG) Annual Report, including the need for RADG to appoint a new Association Co-Chair, the need to attract applications for Association recruitment in 2013 from suitably qualified young people from BME communities and to monitor gender balance.
- The Bribery Policy was approved by Council.
- Appointments to Council and Association groups were noted and approved.

Resolving potential trustee conflict of interest

Council discussed a potential trustee conflict of interest. It approved in principle a joint Development Finance International (DFI) / Oxfam application for funding to external donors, subject to a number of conditions. Honorary Officers would make a final decision when more details were known, and report their decision to Council.

Retirement of Andy Friend and Sandra Dawson

Council showed their appreciation to both Andy Friend and Sandra Dawson, and acknowledged their tremendous contribution during their time as trustees of Oxfam GB. Both reflected on their time on Council, and thanked their fellow trustees and Corporate Management Team members.

The Chair advised that further details of the planned seminar and meeting Thursday 17 / Friday 18 January 2013 would follow in due course.

Karen Brown
Chair