

Status: Public

OXFAM GB

CHAIR'S REPORT ON COUNCIL MEETING OF 21 MARCH 2014

The following people were present at the meeting:

<i>Trustees</i>	<i>Corporate Management and Staff</i>
Karen Brown (Chair)	Mark Goldring (Chief Executive)
Rajiv Joshi	Ben Phillips (Campaigns and Policy Director)
Matthew Martin	Jane Cotton (Human Resources Director)
David Pitt-Watson	Andrew Horton (Trading Director)
Marjorie Scardino	Penny Lawrence (International Director) a.m.
Katy Stewart	Andrew Barton (Acting Fundraising and Supporter Marketing Director)
Gavin Stewart	Sue Turrell (International Programmes Director)
Tricia Zipfel	Bob Humphreys (Finance & Information Services Director)
	Sarah Ireland (Communications Director)
	Joss Saunders (Company Secretary)
	Anne Gornall (Governance and Leadership Team officer)

This was the second meeting of Council's annual cycle for 2013/14.

Chief Executive's Report

Mark Goldring referred trustees to his written report. Building on the report, Mark Goldring highlighted the following after his recent visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC):-

- The level of suffering and deprivation and how much of this was manmade.
- The number of refugees, many living with local families, and the implications for the relief programme.
- The impressive thinking and management behind the humanitarian response.
- The regional management of the programme by Oxfam Belgium. This combined the application of appropriate organisational learning, work on influencing and advocacy and the implementation of audit report recommendations.

Mark Goldring reported that the inspirational image and slogan 'Make Karo Proud' was based on a young woman who had been located in a camp run by Oxfam in the DRC. He showed Council a picture of Karo and her baby. The DRC and Karo encapsulated Oxfam's humanitarian work, its efforts to internationalise, improving risk management and building an influencing agenda.

Trustees were given an update on the organisational change process in the UK which was nearing its conclusion. It was also noted that many staff had been introduced to the incoming members of the Leadership Team who would join in late April and early May – Tim Hunter (incoming Supporter Marketing Director) and Jack Lundie (incoming Communications Director). In the context of all the changes, Council expressed appreciation for the successful launch of the inequality report and the positive media coverage on this.

Oxfam International

Mark Goldring and Penny Lawrence spoke about the proposals that had been further developed since Council's January 2014 discussions in time for the Oxfam International Executive Directors and Board of Supervisors meeting later in March 2014. The aim was the creation of a more balanced organisation between North and South, a more streamlined system of management and a rapid and sensible harmonisation of systems and processes.

Draft Annual Budget and Plan 2015-17

Council considered the latest outlook for 2013/14, headcount and cost reductions, a summary of the 2014/15 budget, income trends and run rates and reserves. Bob Humphreys advised that 2014/15 was a balanced budget with marginal and incremental increases which would be funded by changes elsewhere. Trustees reviewed the balance sheet and how this related to the overall reserves position.

Mark Goldring explained that the corporate objectives were framed in the context of the 3i's (influencing, internationalisation and increasing income) in order to bring them alive. They gave staff and trustees a framework of organisational priorities for the coming year.

Bob Humphreys advised that the discussion of risk scheduled for this Council meeting had been postponed with the agreement of the Chair. Council was informed of a major project to update the approach to organisational risk and to improving Team risk registers. There would need to be a brief risk discussion at the

July Council meeting as part of the approval process of the annual report and accounts, but Trustees' next substantive risk discussion would be at the October meeting. Council was grateful for the additional information given in the Risk Briefing which quantified potential downside risk.

Council thanked the Leadership Team for their input to and explanation of the annual plan, which was approved.

Governance review

Monique Letourneau (Oxfam International Treasurer) and Katy Steward presented the results of a governance review to the meeting. They emphasized that this was a fit for purpose report and not a fundamental review. They expressed appreciation for the input from trustees and management who had been interviewed. The main points were considered as follows:

- Trustees endorsed a suggestion of having a more forward looking and top down consideration of risk to supplement the bottom up analysis currently reviewed by the Leadership Team and the Trustee Audit and Finance Group (TAFG).
- Council considered a suggestion that Programme Review Group (PRG) could provide greater scrutiny of programme progress against strategy and objectives, stronger oversight of programme impact and share new or emergent ideas. It was agreed that any change in the role of PRG regarding programme and impact should not lessen but enhance programme scrutiny as part of the main Council agenda. Council agreed that PRG should experiment with delivering better visibility and depth to discussions about the effectiveness of the programme without taking on additional formal responsibilities on behalf of Council.
- Reflecting on suggestions in the review it was agreed that external guests and input from international staff was always welcome in Council meetings, including more challenge from critics. It was agreed that this dimension would become a routine part of Council business.
- Looking to the future, changes at Oxfam International could have implications for Oxfam GB's governance and these would be shared with Council.
- A number of suggestions were made with regard to the rolling agenda of Council meetings and the Chair invited trustees to contact with her if they had further thoughts.

The Chair thanked Katy Steward and Monique Letourneau for their work on the governance review which had generated a useful analysis and actions to take forward.

Governance and Constitutional Issues

Trustees received reports on the latest activities of the following Committees:

- Trustee Audit and Finance Group;
- Recruitment and Development Group: trustees were updated on trustee recruitment and the upcoming Association recruitment; and
- Programme Review Group.

AOB

The Chair thanked Sarah Ireland for leading on Oxfam's communications for the past year. Drawing on her previous experience as Regional Director for Asia, she had spoken with passion at Council about the importance of positioning women at the heart of everything Oxfam does. The Chair wished her well in her new position as Head of Strategic Planning and Organisational Development.

The Chair thanked Andrew Horton for his inputs to Council as Acting Fundraising and Supporter Marketing Director and for guiding Council through the conception of *Lift Lives for Good*. It was noted that Andrew will continue working both with Oxfam GB and Oxfam International.

The Chair advised that the next meeting take place in Glasgow in July and that details would follow in due course.

Karen Brown
Chair