

Status: Public

OXFAM GB

CHAIR'S REPORT ON COUNCIL MEETING ON 23 JANUARY

The following people were present at the meeting:

Trustees

Karen Brown (Chair)
David Pitt-Watson
Marjorie Scardino
Katy Steward
Tricia Zipfel
Steve Walton
James Darcy
Ruth Ruderham
Gavin Stewart
Kul Gautam
Nkoyo Toyo

Corporate Management and Staff

Mark Goldring (Chief Executive)
Penny Lawrence (Deputy Chief Executive)
Andrew Horton (Trading Director)
Olga Ghazaryan (International Programmes Director)
Bob Humphreys (Finance & Information Services Director)
Jack Lundie (Communications Director)
Tim Hunter (Fundraising Director)
Penny Fowler (Acting Campaigns, Policy and Influencing Director)
Joss Saunders (Company Secretary)
Anne Gornall (Governance and Leadership Team Officer)

Apologies were received from Rajiv Joshi.

The Chair welcomed Olga Ghazaryan in her new role as International Programme Director and Penny Lawrence who had now taken up the full role of Deputy Chief Executive.

She also welcomed Damien Berrendorf (Country Director, Haiti) and Ligia Alvarenga (Deputy Regional Director for Latin America and Regional Transition Director).

This was the first meeting of Council's annual cycle for 2015/16. Declarations of interest were made.

Chief Executive's Report

Each trustee acknowledged a significant item within the report which s/he would like to celebrate or highlight, which included: the report reflects Oxfam's honest attempt to live by its values; the magnificent inputs to and outputs from Davos; the difficult and hard work being done by staff on humanitarian responses, such as Syria and South Sudan; and staff continued to deliver in very difficult circumstances where Oxfam is most needed, which is not always visible. Mark Goldring highlighted recent changes on the Leadership Team. Olga Ghazaryan is now International Programme Director and Françoise Vanni is on her induction as Campaigns, Policy and Influencing Director. Referring to the Campaigns Policy, Influencing and Authorisation Policy Mark Goldring spoke about how the new framework had been applied to upcoming campaigns. The outcome of the Charity Commission conversations and the interpretation of campaigning activity inside and outside Oxfam needs to be monitored closely in the wider context and with the upcoming UK election. Mark Goldring emphasized that the focus at this Council meeting was first to engage with the discussion and exploration of Oxfam GB's identity and focus including its brand identity. This was part of the preparatory work for the annual plan coming to Council in March, but also linked with the wider discussions on Oxfam 2020.

Oxfam GB's identity

Penny Lawrence and Jack Lundie made a joint presentation on Oxfam GB's identity including the history of strategic discussions and agreements since 2010, together with more recent initiatives developed in the context of Oxfam 2020. Jack Lundie gave a presentation to demonstrate work to communicate Oxfam GB more clearly to an external audience. Trustees provided input. Mark Goldring also highlighted the link with the discussions at the Future of INGO seminar which had been held the previous day.

Oxfam 2020 update

Mark Goldring highlighted the recent very positive experience at Davos where Winnie Byanyima (Oxfam International Executive Director) had made a real impact with the discussion on inequality. This high profile would not have been possible without the support and work of affiliates, particularly staff at Oxfam GB. Looking ahead, he remained optimistic about the 2020 vision and some of the current developments but also highlighted implementation issues. Council provided input, and the Trustees provided guidance while endorsing the overall commitment and direction of 2020.

Plans and priorities

Penny Lawrence introduced a draft of Oxfam GB's corporate objectives for 2015/16 and the final objectives would come to Council in March. Olga Ghazaryan spoke about programme objectives. Damien Berrendorf spoke about the programme in Haiti and the challenges faced there. Summarising, Mark Goldring highlighted the links between the corporate plan, the programme plan and a bottom up approach to country planning. These would come together in the March annual plan which would include single year objectives, longer term vision and a budget. The discussion at the seminar on the previous day was also an input to the plan and forward planning.

Governance and risk

- Feedback was provided from the Trustee Audit and Finance Group (TAFG) meeting on 9 January.
- Feedback was provided from the Recruitment and Development Group (RADG) meeting on 2 December, including an update on trustee recruitment.
- Feedback was provided from the Programme Review Group (PRG) meeting on 22 January.
- The Chair advised that lead members and the schedule of working groups that was provided to the meeting was still evolving. Council agreed the proposed appointment of David Pitt-Watson as trustee of the Oxfam (India) Trust and the appointment of Tricia Zipfel to the Programme Review Group until October 2015.
- The Chair advised that trustee appraisals would be completed by the end of January. These would be inputs to the Council Review paper in March.

Thanks

The Chair recorded thanks and good wishes to the following:-

- Ben Phillips for his work as Campaigns, Policy and Influencing Director.
- SueTurrell, who had made a valued contribution as International Programme Director.
- Penny Fowler for her work as Acting Campaigns, Policy and Influencing Director.
- Juan Alberto Fuentes for his contribution to the seminar on the previous day and to the meeting as an observer.

The Chair confirmed that the next Council would take place on 12 and 13 March 2015.

Karen Brown
Chair