Chair’s report on Council meeting of 15 July 2011

# The following people were present at the meeting:-

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| *Trustees*John Gaventa (Chair)Karen BrownJames DarcyMaja DaruwalaGareth DaviesSandra DawsonAndy Friend Rajiv JoshiDavid Pitt-WatsonMarjorie ScardinoNkoyo ToyoTricia Zipfel | *Corporate Management and Staff*Barbara Stocking (Chief Executive) attended during the afternoonBob Humphreys (Finance & Information Services Director)Jane Cotton (Human Resources Director)Phil Bloomer (Campaigns & Policy Director)Thomas Schultz-Jagow (Communications Director)David McCullough (Trading Director)Cathy Ferrier (Fundraising and Supporter Marketing Director)Joss Saunders (Company Secretary)Anne Gornall (Trustees Officer) |

Apologies were received from Vanessa Godfrey and Matthew Martin. The Chair welcomed Liz Hazell (PWC Head of Charities and Oxfam’s Audit Engagement leader). This was the fourth meeting of Council’s annual cycle for 2010/11 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:

*Humanitarian*

*East Africa.* The Chair welcomed Jane Cocking (Humanitarian Director), who gave an update on the situation in East Africa which for Oxfam was a priority response across the organisation. Oxfam and other organisations had anticipated the crisis and already had some long term programmes in place. However, it was now necessary to scale up, both to continue on the longer term projects but more immediately to deliver water and sanitation to people in existing and new camps.

Cathy Ferrier gave details of funds raised in appeals, both directly for Oxfam and what Oxfam was likely to be allocated in the wider Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal. Jane Cocking estimated that around £50m could be needed in the coming year to deal with a disaster of this magnitude.

Trustees expressed appreciation for the efforts and commitment of all who were working on this crisis.

*Pakistan.* Barbara Stocking mentioned a report would be issued in late July to mark a year since the Pakistan floods. Oxfam continued to fundraise to meet the ongoing needs after the floods.

*Development*

For an update on development work, Barbara Stocking referred membersto the Annual Report and Accounts.

*Campaigning*

*GROW campaign.* Barbara Stocking updated trustees on the launch of the campaign, which had gone very well. Her recent programme visits had demonstrated that the campaign articulated the challenges that Oxfam and others needed to address.

*Organisation*

*Oxfam International single management structure (SMS).* Barbara Stocking advised that there had been good progress in recent months on the operational elements of SMS, including an increased understanding of where SMS impacted on the work of individuals and the need to include an Oxfam International dimension to all activities.

*Trailwalker.* Cathy Ferrier advised that the July Trailwalker was sold out, and would be taking place over the coming weekend.

*Glastonbury.* David McCullough gave details of another successful Oxfam involvement with Glastonbury in June.

*Draft Annual Report and Accounts*

The Annual Report and Accounts was introduced by the Honorary Treasurer and Bob Humphreys, with inputs from Liz Hazell. The report and accounts had been considered by the Trustee Audit and Finance Group (TAFG) on 1 July.

Barbara Stocking spoke about the report against corporate objectives and the year ahead. With Bob Humphreys, she advised some additional changes that would be made and took on board suggestions from trustees. Bob Humphreys went through the accounts, the associated policies and some changes in presentation e.g. more emphasis on quantifiable output indicators.

On behalf of Oxfam’s auditors, Liz Hazell thanked the team in Corporate Finance for their support to PWC during the audit. Trustees congratulated the staff in Corporate Finance and Communications who had compiled the final report, and were also pleased to hear that Oxfam’s report and accounts had won an online award (and prize of £2000).

In the context of some agreed final changes, Council approved the annual report and accounts. Council also approved the reserves policy and the investment policy.

The meeting then considered a number of business and governance items on the main agenda, as follows:

1. Bob Humphreys introduced the organisational risk register, which was approved.
2. The amended open information policy was approved, with trustees expressing satisfaction with its implementation.
3. Council approved the amended complaints policy.
4. The updated terrorism and money laundering policy was approved by Council.

*Global Identity*

Cathy Ferrier gave further details of the process following an agreement in principle by the Oxfam International Executive Directors that Oxfam needed one global identity which was authoritative, balanced coherence with flexibility, and worked well across Oxfam in the digital space. She outlined the depth and range of the research behind the current proposal, together with the provocative optimism which informed its message and its appearance. Council expressed support for the development of the global identity proposal so far, with a number of provisos noted.

The remaining governance items were then considered:

1. Council approved the proposed renewal of Maja Daruwala and Matthew Martin to Council. Renewals and appointments to the Association were also approved.
2. The appointment of Namukale Chintu to the Trustee Audit and Finance Group (TAFG) was approved.
3. Trustees noted the 4th quarterly report of 2010/11.

*Trustee Trip to Sierra Leone*

Tricia Zipfel reported back to Council on her programme visit to Sierra Leone. As a trustee she had returned with a much better understanding of the challenges Oxfam faces in working in a fragile state like Sierra Leone. She had met many impressive community leaders, local organisations and other NGOs, working in partnership with Oxfam and had been impressed by the impact Oxfam was making on the ground.

Finally, Andy Friend paid tribute to David McCullough, who was leaving Oxfam in September in order to become Chief Executive of WRVS. Council and CMT also reflected briefly on the meeting of European Oxfam affiliates on 14/15 July.

John Gaventa

Chair