

11 March 2019

Dear Independent Review Panel members,

Thank you for the constructive and insightful feedback you have provided on Amnesty International's 2018 report to Accountable Now. Every year, the compilation of the report becomes an opportunity to come together as an organisation across functions and offices and reflect on how to strengthen our standards and become a more accountable and transparent organisation.

We appreciate the panel's acknowledgment of our progress since the last report – particularly aimed at strengthening our complaint mechanisms, our reporting coverage and internal efforts to mainstream diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work. The continued guidance and support provided by Accountable Now to develop and champion best practices within the sector is invaluable. There are two points we would like to respond to at this point:

Firstly, a point of clarification on the reduction in staff numbers (25%) since 2015, which the panel questioned and connected to the result of the Global Transition Programme. The figures provided cover not just International Secretariat (IS) staff, but all staff worldwide, including in our 70 national entities. This means reductions may have been due to internal issues in those entities, unrelated to the Global Transition which only affected IS staff. In fact, the number of IS staff has overall increased since the opening of the new decentralised IS offices. London-based staff were encouraged and offered a plan to relocate, including by providing a transition period for staff who would relocate (and access to redundancy if they did not want to continue). The majority of staff affected decided in the end not to relocate and were either given redundancy or access to outplacement services, or they found new roles of a fixed-term or permanent nature.

Secondly, we particularly welcome the Panel's suggestion that Amnesty International focus its interim report on internal changes to culture, wellbeing and ways of working. This will be one of my priorities during my tenure as Secretary General. I joined the organisation at a particularly sensitive time, and we have tried to be very open about the challenges we faced in the last year. Staff surveys in 2017 and 2018 revealed significant rates of bullying, marginalisation, or harassment in the organisation and in 2018 we were profoundly shaken by the deaths of long-term staff member Gaëtan Mootoo and intern Roz McGregor.

As a result, we initiated three separate independent reviews to explore the underlying reasons for these tragic events, the responsibility which Amnesty must bear, and the lessons we must learn. The James Laddie Report which considered whether Amnesty discharged its duty of care to Gaëtan Mootoo, was followed by the Rosalind McGregor Review, and finally the KonTerra Staff Wellbeing Review, which looked at wider wellbeing issues into the organisation. The management responses to these reports can be found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

While the reports did not find any grounds for individual blame, we must recognise the shared overall accountability by the leadership of the organisation. The publication of these reports have collectively generated a major moment of reckoning for the organisation, its leadership, and myself. I am now in the process of leading some important changes in response. The first of the important short-term decisions I will make is around the structure of the Senior Leadership team (SLT) we need to lead Amnesty forward. We need to get the structure right at the top level to shape a stronger Amnesty. Each member of the SLT has already offered to step out of their role, taking a share of responsibility for the climate of tension and mistrust in Amnesty, and offering to leave the organisation.

But the challenges highlighted in the KonTerra report will take time to turn around. We must embed culture and wellbeing change systematically and sustainably. We are working on a comprehensive plan over the next month and in the short-term, I will be appointing additional expert human resources capability to help us stabilise and start to address the challenges.

This year will also be an important year for us as we start the process of developing Amnesty's new global strategy – guiding the organisation from 2021 onwards. We will engage in a significant listening exercise to hear from staff, volunteers, partners,

stakeholders, and members of the public on how Amnesty should transform itself to become a more effective organisation, and one that is more accountable to those on whose behalf we work.

We look forward to reporting in detail about the progress in these areas of work in our interim report at the end of 2019.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Naidoo', written in a cursive style.

Kumi Naidoo
Secretary General