



# Amnesty International

## 2015 Update to the INGO Accountability Charter

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**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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## **1. Strategic Commitment to Accountability**

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The end of 2015 marks an exciting turning point for Amnesty International. The New Year will find us launching an overarching four-year Global Strategy that will be delivered by our now globally distributed yet interconnected movement.

Developing and agreeing on our five Strategic Goals was an opportunity to reaffirm what lies at the heart of our understanding of accountability: impact. Our decisions are first and foremost shaped by asking the question: what does it take in the given context to make human rights real in people's lives? To set our priorities we held a big global conversation during 2014-2015, as presented in this update, which involved surveying more than 26,000 people from all around the world and consulting extensively both internally and externally with human rights practitioners. In the process we took stock of global and regional trends and of our own strengths and weakness to make sure that we identify the spaces, levels and actors we have to engage with (or confront) to make a difference where it matters most.

Our accountability is also tightly interconnected with our capacity to play our part in building agency and creating space for others – ordinary people, communities and the civil society - to defend human rights. Our new global strategy is taking this empowering dimension of AI's work a step further by setting clear objectives for increasing the active participation of our stakeholders; empowering and enabling human rights defenders; investing in new approaches that will protect civic space both online and offline; and growing the constituency of activists engaging with AI's campaigns. To this end, throughout 2014 and 2015 we have invested in training staff across all our new Regional Offices in participatory methodologies for campaigning and just this November we launched our first Massive Online Course which aims to build the skills of young people around the world for defending human rights which saw 29,000+ sign ups from 195 countries.

As we embark on this global strategy, not only do we see this as the framework to increase our human rights impact, but we approach this as an exciting opportunity to deepen our commitment to accountability. In this way we believe the organising is taking an intelligent and holistic approach to understanding human rights and promoting human rights change. For our activists and staff around the world this means:

- Maintaining a strong analysis of how and why human rights abuses happen, linking causes with effects and problems with solutions.
- Taking on those responsible for the abuses - be it states, corporations or global institutions and exposing the links between inequality, discrimination, injustice and repression.
- Acting effectively, quickly and responsibly to change the lives of individual people while maintaining our focus on the long-term structural changes.
- Working and learning alongside diverse global, national and local groups and supporting their efforts for human rights change.

We are well aware that to deliver on our ambition in a world of inter-connected, deepening and multi-faceted crises we will need to keep evolving how we practice accountability and ensure we are both effective in what we said we would do and responsive and adaptive to people's needs and realities. As the world keeps changing fast – and along with it, the way people will have to organising to speak and claim their rights – we will need to be ready to test new approaches and make fast and evidence-based decisions. We have actively responded by reforming some of our existing operations of structures and processes whilst introducing new ones: moving ahead with reforming our governance structures; developing an agile impact assessment and learning system that encourages ongoing adaption; revamping our project delivery models to increase cross-regional collaboration and unifying and simplifying accountability measures across our entities.

We are looking forward to sharing updates on achievements and challenges in the next comprehensive AI report to the INGO Accountability Charter.

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015

Signed:



Colm O Cuanachain, For Salil Shetty  
Senior Director, Office of the Secretary General

## 2. Improvement Analysis

### Update on improvement actions

#### Governance

##### Comments by the Charter

It is stated that Amnesty's democratic and regional approach to governance sometimes undermines the effectiveness of decision-making in the highest governance body. The 2014 review of this structure is acknowledged and report on how it results in governance reform is welcome.

The objective of the governance reform process in Amnesty International is to develop a governance model that is fit for purpose. Internal democracy and participation are among Amnesty's strengths, bringing credibility and legitimacy to our work. But there is a recognized need to strengthen the quality and speed of decision making, and the internal accountability processes. We are aiming for governance changes that will better enable us to respond effectively to the human rights violations, and the challenges that the organisation faces and that strengthens AI's leadership.

The International Board developed a vision for governance reform outlining a new governance setting which was endorsed by the International Council in August 2015. The Governance Reform vision is guided by twelve criteria for governance reform identified by the movement and is based on Amnesty International's agreed principles for the movement's democratic governance. It builds on the feedback received from the movement as part of the extensive consultation in 2014 and discussion at the 2015 Chairs Assembly, and is informed by the latest research on the civil society sector and lessons learned from other international organizations.

The holistic approach taken to the governance reform process aims at reforming: structures, processes, people and organizational culture. Four working groups with representatives from sections and structures and led by the Governance Committee (the subcommittee of the International Board leading on this project) were established to develop specific parts of the model after the 2015 International Council Meeting. In the last few months of 2015, they have been working on developing specific aspects of the model as follows: voting rights and membership; structures and accountability; decision-making process; representation of diversity (gender and youth).

In the proposed new model, the current International Council Meeting and Chairs Assembly would be reformed into a single permanent body called the Global Assembly. Decision-making responsibilities would be divided between the Global Assembly and the International Board. The Global Assembly would be accountable to Amnesty International members through their entities, and at the same time the Global Assembly will hold all Amnesty International entities to account. Each entity would be responsible for appointing a delegate to participate in the Global Assembly, and in turn that individual delegate would be accountable to their entity.

The governance reform process aims to achieve decision-making processes that are more participatory, inclusive and effective, ensuring that the right issues are informed by the right information and discussed by the relevant forums at an appropriate time, building a shared ownership of outcomes. As such, Global Assembly decisions will be connected to our substantive human rights agenda and agreed Strategic Goals with greater clarity on decision-making levels. The issues raised to the Global Assembly should be issues of global concern, importance and within its remit.

Regional Forums are proposed that would not be governance structures as they would not be linked to any management structure but they would be key parts of the reformed decision-making process. They would be spaces to prepare for core discussions at the Global Assembly, for participation and strategic engagement with substantial human rights issues of a regional nature, to be informed by external diverse perspectives that can then feed into the broader discussion at the global level; for networking and relationship-building internally and externally; for sharing and learning and to build the capacity of our leaders.

It is envisaged that the proposed governance structures will be fully in line with the global management structures and processes and a range of support systems will be devised to ensure that the quality and substance of the governance systems meets the movement's ambitions. This will include the quality of people (diversity, competencies and experience of members in governance bodies, training and capacity building on governance); the quality and timeliness of information; the quality of preparations and debate (facilitation, inclusion, use of technology and involvement of external experts); overall increased quality of accountability and learning. We will need to ensure that AI's model facilitates and supports diversity of participants, which will include youth and ensure gender balance.

The governance reform may also include changes in the current voting rights system. Different options and scenarios will be explored.

The movement will be further consulted on the proposed model at the beginning of 2016; the final decision will be made at the 2017 International Council Meeting.

## **Programme Effectiveness**

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### **Comments by the Charter:**

Amnesty International is commended for significant progress with regard to introducing good policies and processes in indicators NGO1 to NGO6. The organisation is also commended for rigorously monitoring their implementation and self-critically reporting some areas of weakness - e.g. 17% of national entities report that they fully involve stakeholders in all stages of the programme cycle; 26% have measures to integrate diversity (NGO4) and only 11% to involve partners in the full project cycle (NGO6). Improved numbers in this regard will be an important indicator of further progress.

The Global Transition Programme Interim Assessment completed in 2014 confirmed that operating in a distributed model and being closer to regional realities has created better opportunities for more frequent and quality interactions with civil society partners, human rights defenders and victims of human rights violations. During 2014, the six-monthly assessments of all International Secretariat-led projects indicated a slightly higher percentage of projects in Regional Offices where 'decisions were made jointly' with rights holders in planning and implementing their projects as compared to projects managed by IS, London. Effective collaboration with civil society partners varies by country - proximity and access from the Regional Office being a key factor related to more effective collaborations with many examples of best practice captured. For countries that are less accessible from the existing Regional Offices, the benefits have not been as visible.

In 2014, participation of different stakeholders in the work carried out by Amnesty International national entities has been invariably high (over 90%). In particular, participation of rights holders has increased (91% across all entities -an increase of 13% in comparison with 2013), but this engagement remains stronger in the implementation phase of the projects than in the design and planning stages.

In a similar pattern, the movement has witnessed a steady increase in entities reporting having gender and diversity measures in place (70% by 2014 as compared to 42% in 2011), ranging from informal processes (12%), policies and systems for internal stakeholders (33%) to policies and systems to engage both internal and external stakeholders (25%). Still, only 25% of the entities have systems to ensure gender and diversity is taken into consideration when engaging with both internal and external stakeholders and only six entities reported feedback and accountability measures to ensure they integrate gender and diversity in all aspects of the work. Nevertheless an increasing number of entities are taking significant positive steps in that direction. To name a few: AI Spain has developed a Gender Action Plan and has gender focal points responsible for ensuring gender mainstreaming at all levels, from the internal point of view (e.g. organizational issues, language, images, media, etc.) and external (e.g. work in campaigns). In Africa, most entities have clearly demonstrated a diversity focus within their growth strategy: for example, AI Zimbabwe has a gender action plan and witnessed considerable growth of 40% in members with 45% of those being women and AI Kenya has created a social network for women in Nairobi and Mombasa and hosted meetings that catered specifically to women thus creating an enabling environment for women to speak and thrive. AI Canada has developed a Gender Equality policy and a training plan for gender work was initiated in 2015

and AI USA delivered training and develop tools to mainstream gender in different workspaces (e.g. staff, key volunteer leaders).

In summary, the lesson is that we need to improve the depth and quality of our engagement with our varied constituencies and build on existing successes and best practices. Throughout 2014 and into 2015 Amnesty International has been investing in that direction. We have also put special emphasis in the development of organisational capabilities to better integrate gender and diversity in all aspects of our projects, guidelines and trainings. Actions taken include:

Significantly increasing stakeholder engagement in the strategy setting process: Amnesty International made important efforts to ensure we sought the views of a wide range of stakeholders, both internal and external, whilst developing our global strategy for 2016 to 2019.

We promoted a wide conversation throughout 17 months of consultation process within the movement and beyond, running from January 2014 to end of May 2015, spanning across three phases and gathering in total 98 submissions from national entities (32 from the Global South) and the International Secretariat offices. An online discussion space (<http://strategicgoalsanalysisbuilding.ning.com/>) was created and attracted over 500 members of Amnesty staff / volunteers from 68 countries.

Importantly, Amnesty International put special emphasis in increasing external engagement: i) sought engagement from partner organisations, other movements (e.g. trade unions), journalists, academics, and other experts, with many Regional Offices and national entities hosting their own consultation process with stakeholders to inform the above mentioned submissions ii) launched an online strategy crowd-sourcing survey which, as mentioned previously, got over 26,000 responses from 197 countries including 7000+ from the Global South iii) hosted 7 meta-trend events with high profile external speakers to scan external trends and utilised the Regional Advisory Groups as platforms to facilitate strategic-analysis building (as mentioned in last year's report, AI has set up RAGs comprised of external critical friends for each region that meet annually).

In addition, we developed 12 global Theories of Change that will shape the implementation of the Strategic Goals in the years to come and which were peer-reviewed by external critical friends. Both mainstreaming gender and diversity and incorporating active participation and mobilisation were elevated as cross-cutting themes that have been reflected in all of AI's global Theories of Change.

Stronger emphasis on training and skill sharing among relevant staff to increase capabilities for working in participatory ways

Between 2014 and 2015, nine Strategic Campaigning & Participatory Approaches workshops were held for staff in campaigning related roles. The aim of the workshops was to enable participants to gain knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop and implement strategic campaigns, and to gain understanding of the principles of participatory approaches. All the Regional Offices have been trained in strategic campaigning and participatory approaches, to embed a common understanding of campaign planning and participatory methodologies across the movement.

In addition, a more in-depth five-day Global Participatory Approaches and Tools workshop was held for 25 participants from the IS, National Offices and Sections and Structures. The aim of the workshop was for participants to develop an understanding of the principles of participatory approaches and tools in general and in the context of human rights work; and to develop skills and learn about attitudes and behaviours required to implement participatory approaches and tools in their work with partners, rights holders, activists and young people.

International Board Youth Twinning

In 2015, the International Board Youth Twinning was initiated, connecting five youth leaders from Peru, The Philippines, Kenya, Norway and New Zealand to International Board members. Throughout the year, these youth leaders had conversations with the International Board members, gained more insight into what the role of the International Board members consists of in practice and shared their perspectives on the Strategic Goals. The youth leaders participated at the International Council meeting and spoke together with other youth delegates in plenary calling for active and meaningful participation of young people at all levels

of Amnesty International's work, not only in the implementation of campaigns but also in governance structures, nationally and internationally.

Actions that will shape the next year include:

#### Embedding stakeholder engagement throughout the project cycle

Amnesty International has launched clear minimum standards for quality project development that among other things ask from all projects to have a clear stakeholder engagement strategy and to have assessed how different groups of stakeholders – including the most marginalised – stand to benefit from and shape AI's work. We are also aiming to dedicate increased resources to accompany our project teams so these standards are effectively embedded. This includes support to ensure that priority areas of work are monitored and assessed with the participation of partners, rights holders and external critical friends.

#### Focus on impact and results

With the Strategic Goals now agreed, the organisational priority is on impact. When we embarked upon the Global Transition Programme, the main aim was to increase our impact as an organisation. The International Board has now set this as a priority and the Secretary General with the International Secretariat will be implementing a newly developed impact assessment framework linked to our priority projects for 2016.

#### A re-invigorated structure for mainstreaming gender

A clear mandate from Strategic Goal 2 saw the collaborative development of Amnesty International's Theory of Change to reduce discrimination and identity-based violence and to enable progress towards equality on the basis of gender, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. As a result, a portfolio of six global projects are being planned for the next two years which will advance AI's vision to both mainstream gender effectively from a programmatic point of view, but also from an organisational point of view.

One such project will seek to strengthen support structures for Gender mainstreaming at Amnesty International through the enhancement and formalisation of the Women's Human Rights Network (IWHRN). This is a structure that was put in place and recognised by the International Board in 2011 as an agent to support and follow up Gender Mainstreaming processes, and to strengthen Amnesty International's dedicated work on women's human rights. This network will seek to have dedicated focal points leading on gender and women's rights at the appropriate levels and in all entities to coordinate, advise and share expertise on gender and women's rights issues, and put in place oversight, monitoring and assessment mechanisms with regard to gender and women's human rights work.

### **Global Talent Management**

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#### **Comments by the Independent Review Panel:**

The whole process of decentralisation and moving to the Global South surely necessitates huge investments into building the capabilities and capacities of people for it to be successful. More evidence on how these needs are systematically identified and addressed is important. The envisaged mapping of training activities in a central database seems to be a good start. A rate of 45% for staff appraisals at the national level is rather low.

To ensure nurture and development of our talent, a Management training scheme was launched in 2014. The scheme is structured around 'bite-sized training modules' that Managers can pick and choose from according to their needs but attendance of three sessions per year is compulsory. Training topics include managing difficult behaviours and conversations, managing your time and managing your manager, being a manager and more. The topics were selected from an analysis of previous 'test' management training programme run in 2013 through a survey monkey that asked managers which sessions they found most valuable and what was missing from the programme. These bite-sized sessions were extended in 2015 for all staff at the IS (London and non-London locations) and have been well attended. Additionally, stress and resilience training was run for all IS staff and managers in 2015: face-to-face training for those based in London and live webinars for non-London based staff and managers according to three different time zones -

Asia, Africa and Americas. Induction training for all staff has also been improved in 2014 and 2015 and now receives better feedback as measured by feedback forms circulated after the training. A new induction guide that helps taking a step approach to induction is also being launched in 2015 to help new staff navigate the first two months of their employment with Amnesty (what you need to know you first week/first month/ second month).

Staff – both from IS and national entities – also receive specialised training according to their functional roles with emphasis on training for researchers, campaigners, media workers and activism coordinators (as per examples mentioned in the programme effectiveness part of this update).

As part of ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion and making the IS a positive working place for all, the IS has sought to obtain accreditation from the National Equality Standard (<http://www.ey.com/UK/en/Home/National-Equality-Standard>) during 2015. The process of preparing our submission to the NES set a positive platform on which to build robust learning and development modules within the IS. Seven working groups focusing on different elements of equality and diversity were set up (for example leadership that inspires, culture of inclusion etc.) formed from interested employees across the IS. The groups compared AI's actions and current policies against the standards and there were several updates given in All Staff meetings and SLT meetings throughout 2015. Our final assessment report was received at the end of December 2015 and we were only **seven** competencies away from success (we were assessed against **70 competencies** in total). We are now in the process of reviewing the feedback from the NES and making recommendations for improvements. We'll work in partnership with the NES to ensure we identify the gaps, prioritise them and address them. The NES read through the many pages of our document submissions, spoken to over 20 people and thoroughly analysed our processes. Although we didn't meet the standard this time, it is very much the beginning of the journey and we look forward to continuing to work with the NES and our internal working groups in order to improve EDI within Amnesty.

For example, through this process, we now know that we need to increase awareness for managers and staff about 'unconscious bias'; more training for managers in particular on managing diversity in their teams; and we need to do more to encourage women in senior positions. Training on the agenda for 2016 is on unconscious bias and bullying and harassment.

The implementation of a more robust appraisal system in 2014 has meant that within the IS, completion rates are regularly exceeding 90%. In 2014 we have also witnessed a positive increase to the number of national entities that report that staff appraisals are carried out for all their staff – from 45% to 53%.

In summary, working within the backdrop of GTP has brought new challenges especially for the International Secretariat but has also given a real impetus to embed long-term projects that will accrue long-term rewards.

## **Anti-corruption**

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### **Comments by the Independent Review Panel:**

Amnesty can be commended for developing strong anti-corruption policies as well as monitoring staff awareness thereof. It is acknowledged that they self-critically report low numbers of staff being fully aware of these policies and announcing more training and awareness raising initiatives. Progress report is welcome.

As reported in 2014 in respect of activities during 2013, we conducted a review of Amnesty International's approach in October 2013 which exposed a lack of awareness among staff of our internal policy. During 2014, we therefore developed and implemented a new 'workshop' training programme, which was presented to and approved by the Senior Leadership Team and the Management Team, and which encouraged an open discussion of the issues in a case-study based approach. The programme was delivered to a number of 'target groups', comprised of staff members identified as being at specific risk. In total, the programme reached over 100 staff members at our London and Regional Offices. The workshop covered bribery as well as wider issues associated with corruption, including in the area of procurement and recruitment practices; the programme has continued in 2015. In summary, the workshop programme has raised awareness of the relevant issues among staff who are most likely to be affected, as well as ensuring that staff at our new regional offices have some basic knowledge and guidance.

