

2 July, 2014

Dear members of the independent review panel,

I would like to thank you for your time and effort devoted to producing the feedback on ActionAid International's annual report (2012) to INGO Accountability Charter.

We highly value comments of the independent panel on our reports and will continue to incorporate them in our future work towards better accountability.

We will use your feedback to further improve accountability through our work on operationalizing the new ActionAid Accountability Charter (approved by the General Assembly in June 2013) across the federation and measure our success in achieving this by using the practical time-bound organizational accountability framework.

Membership to the INGO Accountability Charter is significant for us for two main reasons: firstly, we regard this as an open declaration of ActionAid's pro-active commitment to advancing accountability at all levels; and secondly, we believe that the INGO Charter membership is an opportunity to learn from our peers and contribute to generating development sector-wide knowledge creation about practicing better multiple accountabilities.

We thank you and Berlin Civil Society Centre for your continuous support through this process.

With warm regards,



**Adriano Campolina - Chief Executive Officer
ActionAid International**

ActionAid International response to specific feedback:

Note to the Independent Panel: we have chosen to only respond to some of the main points that we would like to draw the Independent Panel's attention to; however, I would like to assure you that we will make every effort to address every point included in the feedback document in our next annual report to INGO Accountability Charter.

Review Panel identified:

"To further improve ActionAid's accountability, the Panel recommends placing the Charter logo on the organization's website and also encourages ActionAid to improve the readability of the Charter report to reach a broader audience." P.2

ActionAid responds:

We are in the process of redesigning our transparency web-page on ActionAid International website, so we will place the Charter logo next to our recent reports to INGO Accountability Charter. We will also reduce the use of acronyms and jargon in our future reports, and provide brief explanation of our policies in order to improve the readability of it.

Review Panel identified:

"It would be interesting to have more information on the exact distribution of power between the IS and the Affiliates and Associates. How does ActionAid bridge the tensions of devolving meaningful power to the national/subordinate level, while remaining agile and effective at the Global level? This is all the more important as the CEO statement refers to "creating an international NGO by devolving powers to countries". P.3.

ActionAid responds:

ActionAid revised the federal principles and retained only 4: equality, interdependence, accountability and subsidiarity. The latter means taking decisions as close as possible to those they concern. We believe that through this principle we can think through the effect and repercussion of decisions taken. In addition, by devolution of power we mainly mean addressing power inequality between the members rather than the power inequality between the International Secretariat and members. We believe that we are achieving this by having the general assembly (represented by all members) as a central structure assisting this power sharing process.

Review Panel identified:

"The report would further profit from a clear indication of measurements used to arrive at impact claims e.g. on people reached". P.2

ActionAid responds:

While we fully agree with the feedback about providing more explanation about the methodology used to arrive at aggregated federation-wide numbers, which the Evaluation and Accountability Unit of the International Secretariat is working on, we would like to clarify that in the report (2012) we reported against the indicators measuring **number of people reached** (output level indicators) and **number of people experiencing change** (which combined outcome and impact level indicators).

At community level ActionAid programmes have monitoring tools such as registers which are used to capture the numbers of people we are directly reaching through our interventions. And through participatory review and reflection exercises conducted, most significant change stories, surveys and other evaluation methods used with community members, changes occurring in people's lives were documented. These figures were reported against an initial monitoring and evaluation framework, which tested over 200 indicators and various data collection methodologies. This framework has now been replaced by the new Global Monitoring and Evaluation Matrix.

The global matrix has reduced the indicators down to 61 Global indicators out of which 31 enable us to report on prioritised **Impact and Outcomes** and 30 – on outputs and process. The Matrix has been accompanied with specific tools and guidance for monitoring and reporting at all levels some of which are still being tested. This approach has increased our abilities to apply more rigorous and systematic methodologies in measuring and aggregating the results of our work.

Our approach to M&E remains community driven and as such there is still more work being done in terms strengthening local capacity in documentation, analysis and reporting as well providing and or innovating more relevant and user friendly tools, methodologies and system for community driven information management.

Review Panel identified:

“With regard to inclusion, ActionAid reports they “celebrate diversity”, but all information given is just related to gender mainstreaming. Potential discrimination based on e.g. age, disability, ethnicity, etc. are not mentioned.”

ActionAid responds:

We recognize the existing gap in our ability to generate aggregated data regarding integration of diversity in our work. This still represents a challenge to us as a federation working in 47 different contexts, where sometimes a simple definition of “child” might vary considerably. However, the new Global Monitoring and Evaluation Matrix attempts to contextualize the definitions used in the Global indicators, which should enable us to **methodologically** aggregate the federation-wide data around the diversity indicators too.

As for the human resource diversity data, the first diversity report (for 2013) for the International Secretariat that will be incorporated in our next Charter report, provides information around various elements on workforce composition based on age, tenure, gender, ethnicity, nationality. We will extend tracking diversity for the federation on gender, age, tenure, nationality for the financial year 2014-15.

Review Panel identified:

“ActionAid did not include the GAP Analysis Table as required in the new reporting guide. This table is supposed to give a very brief overview on improvements ActionAid focuses on in the coming years and any progress that has been achieved so far. P. 2”

ActionAid responds:

We regret to note missing GAP Analysis Table. However, from the guidance provided on top of the tool template, which reads “as of reports submitted in 2014, members are asked to capture these commitments in this Gap Analysis Table”, we understood we were not required to send it last year. We will be happy to include it in the next report to the Charter as a good way of monitoring our progress towards the commitments outlined in the report.

Review Panel identified:

“It would be interesting to know who in ActionAid is involved in which way to collate and edit the report and how the feedback is used to further mainstream accountability across all functions in the organization. How does ActionAid ensure the report is read by the designated target audience?” P.4

ActionAid responds:

We will include the full ActionAid process chart for reporting to INGO Accountability Charter in the next report, which will also show how ActionAid ensures that the report is read by the target audience.

Review Panel identified:

EN 26 – “ActionAid only refers to a community programme in Vietnam”.

ActionAid responds:

ActionAid operates in a highly decentralized manner and we are pleased with the extent to which our members are engaging with our efforts to align our work with the principles of sustainable development. Given the nature of our structure and available resources, it has been a challenge to collect the learning and mitigation initiatives being carried out. Beginning in 2014, the Secretariat will be sharing the leadership of this work with ActionAid

Bangladesh, we are excited about this direction and believe that we will have more stories to share about our 2014 work.

Review Panel identified:

LA1 – “As in the previous reports, ActionAid only reports on the total number of staff divided into female and male staff. Information on where staff is located, the proportion of senior management to workforce, clusters of professions or how much work relies on volunteers would be interesting additional information to complete the picture.”

ActionAid responds:

Now we have an institutionalised federation wide HR reporting process covering all aspects HR / employee lifecycle processes, therefore, for 2013 full data on staff segregation function-wise for the Federation is available, additionally there is a section on staff category segregation which includes count of consultants, volunteers, fellows, temporary staff.

Review Panel identified:

LA10 – “The organization indicates that it is not in a position to report on the hours devoted to training per employee per year”.

ActionAid responds:

Our research and observation of the current trends suggests that most best in class organisations have moved away from maintaining “training man days” as a training index. Instead, they have started looking at training spends and per unit staff training costs , as well as post training effectiveness plans and indices. In addition, the man day definition makes an assumption of each day’s training equivalent to eight hours, and thus the focus is on quantitative hours rather than the quality of the training. We believe that training man hours can be misleading especially if staff attended meetings which had a functional / domain expertise training as a sub section, sometimes these would get counted as “training man days. “ Therefore, we collect the full data on number of staff trained across the federation, total cost on staff training, %-age of staff training cost to total staff cost ratio, per unit cost spent on staff.