

20 December 2013

## Independent Review Panel – Virtual Meeting 28-29 November Letter to the Members in this Review Round

Dear Barry Coates,

Thank you for submitting your accountability report to the Charter's Independent Review Panel for assessment. As in previous years we found that the quality of reports is generally improving, demonstrating greater institutional commitment and more evidence that mechanisms are working in practice. Before providing individual feedback on your organisation's report, allow us however to highlight three areas of general concern:

### **1.) *Embedding the Charter as a tool for organisational development (3.5)***

The disclosure profile 3.5 looks like a rather technical question on how the report is compiled and organisations tend to report accordingly. But it really asks for a process that is at the heart of what the Charter wishes to achieve: using the report as an opportunity for a cross functional systematic and critical reflection on how accountability is best implemented underpins the legitimacy and quality of your organisation's work. Accountability is all too often perceived as a defensive tool, when it is really a mechanism to pro-actively support organisational development. Please describe under 3.5 how you use the reporting process to embed accountability into your organisation. Against this background Members are also strongly encouraged to place the Charter logo prominently on their website and to further link to the Charter website, so that stakeholders know what to hold you accountable against.

### **2.) *Complaints Handling Mechanisms (NGO2)***

Having a fully functioning complaints handling mechanism in place is the only Minimum Standard for Charter Members so far. The Panel is very concerned about rather slow progress by many Charter Members to comply with this. We have therefore decided to ask the Charter Board to look into implementing a timeline and sanctions policy for compliance. In our view the leeway should be no longer than two to maximum three years after a Minimum Standard has been adopted. You find examples of well-functioning complaints handling mechanisms in the Good Practice document on the Charter website, capturing good examples from this and previous reporting rounds.

### **3.) *Succinctness and communication quality***

There is a danger that accountability standards develop a life of their own and become increasingly complex and detached. We have noted that Charter reports tend to get longer without necessarily providing more relevant information. It is important however to use these reports to actively communicate internally and externally how accountability is part of the DNA of your organisation and strengthens the quality of your work. In order for these reports to be read, we suggest that they should have a maximum of 40 pages. For each GRI indicator it is sufficient to report three things:

- a) Do you have policies and processes in place to address the issue?
- b) Do you have evidence that it is embedded in systematic practice?
- c) Is there evidence to show that this has led to improved quality of work?

Sometimes the Panel asks for more information. We are trying to do so only where it is necessary, and we encourage you to be as succinct as possible, and take the above three parameters as guidance. Also try to avoid repetition and where illustrations are given, please keep these brief. Organisations who wish to merge their accountability report with the annual report are encouraged to additionally provide a separate and

more reflective addendum relating to the Charter if the annual reports do not embrace that due to a desire to be more promotional.

Organisation-specific feedback to Oxfam New Zealand:

*The report does include relevant and interesting information and the policies and procedures in place seem relevant and sufficient. However, given that this is the organisation's third accountability report it should be more self-reflective and provide more evidence, more information on detailed written policies, how they have been applied in practice and what concrete positive effects they had for the organisation's work. Despite the Panel encouraging the organisation to strengthen its commitment to accountability and this process, the Panel does not see many such signs. Parts of the report have been put together from other reports (3.5, NGO2) and the statement (1.1) has not been written exclusively for this report nor signed by the CEO. Furthermore, the layout has not developed and does not represent a format that will attract a wider audience. Also, the commitments made earlier are not addressed in this report (see GAP analysis at the end). The commitment to introducing anti-corruption training could however be commended, as well as the good results within the area of the organisation's environmental footprint and the diversity approach. Finally, it is strongly recommended that Oxfam International finds a coherent reporting format for the entire federation.*

Our intention is that this letter, and any response you may wish to provide, is made publicly available on the Charter website, along with your report. You can find the reports that were previously reviewed on the Charter website. However, should there be errors of fact in the feedback above or in the note below we would of course wish to correct these before publication. Please share these comments or corrections by 20 January 2014.

If you have any other feedback or comments on our work, please share with us by sending them to the Charter Secretariat. We would very much like to hear your views.

Yours sincerely,



Janet Hunt · Wambui Kimathi · Tony Tujan · Richard Manning · Louise James · Brendan Gormley

**Review Round October 2013  
Cover Note on Accountability Report  
Oxfam New Zealand**

**Reporting period: 01 July 2011 to 30 June 2012**

<b>PROFILE DISCLOSURE</b>	
<b>Profile</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Strategy and Analysis</b>	
1.1	<i>Partially addressed</i> The statement from the most senior decision-maker gives relevant information; however, it does not give an analytic insight on strategic topics and priorities or an outlook on the main challenges. Furthermore, it does not include information on objectives, risks and opportunities or trends affecting the organisation.
<b>Organisational Profile</b>	
2.1 – 2.10	<i>Fully addressed</i>
<b>Report Parameters</b>	
3.1 – 3.4	<i>Fully addressed</i>
3.5	<i>Fully addressed</i> Information about the process for defining report content is given. However, Oxfam NZ is asked to provide information in its next report on how the process for defining the report content embedded the Charter more strongly within the organisation.
3.6	<i>Fully addressed</i>
3.7	<i>n/a</i>
3.8	<i>Fully addressed</i> The Charter contacted the organisation asking for clarification on this point on reporting for joint ventures etc. Oxfam NZ stated that according to the accounting system the organisation follows when sending money to the organisation's partners or field offices, Oxfam NZ treats the whole money send out as expenditure in the organisation's accounts. Subsequently Oxfam NZ monitors and keeps close control of the actual expenditure through regular expenditure reports received from field officers and partners.
3.10 – 3.12	<i>n/a</i>
<b>Governance, Commitments, and Engagement</b>	
4.1	<i>Partially addressed</i> The statement includes relevant information about the government structure; however complete information on the entire governance structure as well as on Board subcommittees is missing. Information on how Oxfam NZ's specific governance structure optimally supports the impact and quality of the organisation is welcome in the next report.
4.2 – 4.3	<i>Fully addressed</i>
4.4	<i>Fully addressed</i> Information about mechanisms for internal stakeholders etc. to provide recommendations is given. Oxfam NZ is commended for its periodical Board meetings with staff and the feedback loops attached. Information on how Oxfam NZ ensures that the exchange of information is meaningful and leads to management response is welcome in the next report.
4.14	<i>Fully addressed</i>
4.15	<i>Fully addressed</i> The answer gives information about the basis for identification and selection of

	stakeholders. Evidence on where the choice of the right stakeholder has had a positive impact on the organisation’s work is welcome in the next report.
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<b>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</b>	
<b>Program Effectiveness</b>	
<b>NGO1 – Stakeholder involvement</b>	<i>Partially addressed</i>
The information provided about involvement of stakeholders is relevant; however the information is not very detailed and information on how well the feedback from stakeholders is implemented and affected the decision making process is missing.	
<b>NGO2 – Mechanisms for feedback and complaints</b>	<i>Partially addressed</i>
The statement includes relevant information about the mechanisms for feedback and complaints. The timeliness of response is seen as an excellent commitment by the Panel. However, it is not clear if the described complaints process is only open to “partners” or if it is open to all affected stakeholders and beneficiaries. Further information on which types of complaints remained unresolved are welcome in the next report.	
<b>NGO3 – Programme monitoring, evaluation and learning</b>	<i>Partially addressed</i>
The information provided gives relevant information about the organisation’s monitoring system. Information on quality improvements, adjustments done and how these changes were communicated is missing and asked for in the next report.	
<b>NGO4 – Gender and diversity</b>	<i>Partially addressed</i>
The information provided outlines the relevance of gender and diversity for the organisation, its work and its programmes. The Panel appreciates the great variety of diversity dimensions within Oxfam NZ. However, it does not include much on policies related to diversity and too little on the tools for diversity analysis.	
<b>NGO5 – Advocacy positions and public awareness campaigns</b>	<i>Partially addressed</i>
The information provided about the organisation’s advocacy positions is relevant. The banana supply chain is seen as a good example to include corrections after research has been done. However, it does not include a description of the general process for corrective adjustment of advocacy positions or information on the process for exiting a campaign.	
<b>NGO6 – Coordination with other actors</b>	<i>Fully addressed</i>
Further evidence how systematic coordination with other actors has significantly improved the accountability of Oxfam NZ’s work is welcome in the next report.	
<b>Economic</b>	
<b>NGO7 – Resource allocation</b>	<i>Partially addressed</i>
Information on resource allocation is given. However, information on the implementation and standard used to track use of resources is missing. The demonstration that Oxfam NZ’s budget process and mechanisms for resource allocation ensure optimal attainment of its strategic priorities is welcome in the next report.	
<b>NGO8 – Sources of funding</b>	<i>Partially addressed</i>
The answer provides information about the sources of funding. However, information on the largest donors in monetary value is incomplete.	
<b>EC7 – Local hiring</b>	<i>Fully addressed</i>

<p><b>Environmental</b></p> <p><b>EN16 – Greenhouse gas emission by weight</b>  <i>Partially addressed</i>            The answer includes information on the amount of greenhouse emissions but does not indicate how data was collected. Furthermore, the emissions are not divided in direct or indirect emissions.</p> <p><b>EN18 – Initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emission</b>  <i>Fully addressed</i>            The organisation could be commended for innovative ideas and for having reduced the emission well beyond its own target. This can be seen as <b>good practice</b>.</p>
<p><b>Labor</b></p> <p><b>LA1 – Total workforce</b>  <i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p><b>LA10 – Workforce training</b>  <i>Partially addressed</i>            The organisation states that it does not keep record of hours of training by staff members; however does report on number of attended trainings for New Zealand based staff. The answer does however not include information on whether non-New Zealand based staff attended trainings. Information on the strategic definition where training is needed and how these trainings improved the quality of the organisation’s work is welcome in the next report.</p> <p><b>LA12 – Performance and career development reviews</b>  <i>Fully addressed</i>            Information on how these performance reviews are linked to strategic priorities in the organisation is welcome in the next report.</p> <p><b>LA13 – Composition of workforce and governance bodies</b>  <i>Partially addressed</i>            The information provided about the composition of the organisation’s workforce is relevant; however information on age groups is missing. Furthermore, it would have been interesting to see a comment on the numbers provided, especially the difference in percentage of women/men in staff vs. governance bodies.</p>
<p><b>Society</b></p> <p><b>SO1 – Impact of operations on communities</b>  <i>Partially addressed</i>            The answer provides relevant information about the organisation’s programme effectiveness; however it is not very specific and information on how data is collected, the number of activities to which the policies apply, whether they have been effective (evidence for improved management response) or whether feedback has led to steps towards further community engagement is missing.</p> <p><b>SO3 – Anti-corruption training</b>  <i>Partially addressed</i>            The organisation explains how it covers this kind of training when inducting new staff on Oxfam values. The need for specific training in fraud and corruption has however been identified and the organisation plans such training for all relevant staff in the forthcoming year. Information on how these trainings have improved the quality of Oxfam NZ’s report is welcome in the next report.</p>
<p><b>Product Responsibility</b></p> <p><b>PR6 – Ethical fundraising and marketing communications</b>  <i>Partially addressed</i>            Relevant information about programmes for adherence to laws is provided, however numbers of complaints and actions taken are missing.</p>

## Oxfam New Zealand Gap Analysis Table – Areas of Commitments and Progress achieved

Accountability is a process of continuous improvement. Each year Charter Members in their accountability reports identify and prioritise areas for improvement and corrective actions they plan to take. As of reports submitted in 2014, Members are asked to capture these commitments in this Gap Analysis Table. The Independent Review Panel may suggest the Member to add further issues when reviewing the Member's report. Each year following, the table shall be submitted along with the accountability report and will then be used as a basis to demonstrate progress. The table will be published on the website along with the accountability report and the feedback from the Panel. Please note that the rows where commitments cannot be identified can be deleted from the table.

GRI - Performance Indicators	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
<b>General</b>				
	<b>In report covering 2010/11:</b> <i>"Oxfam New Zealand is planning to undertake a more formal social audit report in the next reporting period."</i>	<b>In report covering 2011/12:</b> No progress reported.		
<b>Program Effectiveness</b>				
NGO1: Processes for involvement of affected stakeholder groups.	<b>In report covering 2010/11:</b> <i>"ONZ is working towards improved information sharing and feedback with partners, stakeholders and allies. Clear agreements (...) on the partnership process and the commitment and obligations of both parties are developed in consultation with partners (...)."</i>	<b>In report covering 2011/12:</b> No progress reported.		
NGO4: Measures to integrate gender and diversity into program.	<b>In report covering 2010/11:</b> <i>"To improve practice in and identify improved targeting of programmes ONZ is improving its baseline design and data collection in order to disaggregate target populations."</i>	<b>In report covering 2011/12:</b> No progress reported.		



	<i>Examples of this include identifying people living with disability, HIV/AIDS and female headed households.”</i>			
<b>Economic</b>				
–				
<b>Environmental</b>				
EN16: Greenhouse gas emission by weight	<p><b>In report covering 2010/11:</b>  <i>“Reduction recommendations for 2011/2012 include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Using a portable power meter to identify big energy users (...).</i></li> <li><i>• Oxfam NZ will focus specifically on staff commuting and may make separate goals within this area to get each staff member involved.</i></li> <li><i>• Practical measures such as performing a paper audit trail will help to increase paper recycling around the office.”</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>In report covering 2011/12:</b>  <i>“Oxfam NZ is committed to a 2011/2012 GHG reduction target of lowering emissions by 15% relative to the number of fulltime employees, from original base year levels (5.19 tonne CO2e per fulltime employee). This goal has been achieved and well surpassed, having reduced emissions / employee by 38% this year in comparison to the base year.”</i></p>		
<b>Labor</b>				
–				
<b>Society</b>				
SO3 – Percentage of employees trained in organization’s anticorruption policies and procedures		<p><b>In report covering 2011/12:</b>  <i>Oxfam has “identified the need for staff training in fraud and corruption and plan[s] to undertake training for all relevant staff in the forthcoming financial year”.</i></p>		
<b>Product Responsibility</b>				
–				