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Interim Report to the Accountable Now Independent Review Panel (May 2018)

Statement from the most senior decision-maker of the organisation

I write this interim report at a time when **the need to strengthen our accountability** – at Oxfam, and across our sector – **is intensely heightened**. The cases of sexual abuse and misconduct which have come to the fore in recent months have sent shockwaves through our organisations. We have not done enough to prevent them, and fell short in our response at the time. As such, we let down our people, our partners and the communities we work with. For Oxfam, this has been a wake-up call. We recognise we need to scale up our accountability effort - **“upwards”** through our governance mechanisms, and to our donors and supporters; **“horizontally”** among affiliates and those leading our work in countries and regions; and in a **dynamic relationship with those we work with**, and who we want to be led by. Women and those in the most vulnerable situations must be at the heart of this accountability shift.

Our interim report shows the **improvements we have made** in the areas where the Independent Review Panel made recommendations, following our last accountability report. Let me highlight just a few:

Partners are playing a more active role across Oxfam. Our country strategies involve partners at every stage of the process to help us better understand the value we can add. Our Program Leadership Journey is building capacity of both Oxfam staff and partners. We will review our partnership approaches further in 2018-19 via our strategic collaboration with the Partnership Brokers’ Association.

We have **started our Program Quality Review process**, led and coordinated at the regional level. This is part of a wider reflective approach that enables us to provide more quantitative and qualitative information on feedback and complaints in future reporting. We are learning important lessons about how to further improve the way we handle complaints. We have agreed ways to better share data on cases of corruption among and between affiliates and OI, and we are exploring how to consolidate this effectively into a single One Oxfam case management system. We are also committed to engaging deeply on feedback from the communities with whom our programs engage via our new “One Program Report”

The fundamental organizational change we call “Oxfam 2020” continues to drive an ambitious recalibration of Oxfam: away from a Northern-INGO model focused on service-delivery to one that is globally rebalanced, and rooted within social justice movements – one that influences and delivers together with Southern partners. More than ever we feel now more able to link actors, share

knowledge and work to convene. We can actually move faster in supporting local resilience and community-led responses in humanitarian crises. The transition to integrated OI line management of our work in countries and regions has been a huge step in this journey. It is now nearly done. Fifty country programmes have transitioned as of March 2018 and the remaining 17 are in the final steps of the process.

In November 2016 and March 2017, we celebrated the affiliations of Oxfam South Africa and Oxfam Brasil, respectively. We now have 20 Oxfam affiliates. In October 2017 we welcomed KEDV, a strong women's rights organisation in Turkey, as an observer. Led by independent boards and national staff, these affiliates are helping to diversify our global thinking and decision making and to understand better what our stakeholders in the global South need and value. The relocation of our headquarters to Nairobi as our new 'centre of gravity' is also gathering pace.

These are a few examples of our **change to being an organisation that is more responsive, relevant and accountable** to our people and partners and the communities with whom we work. Rooting our leadership in the South, with Country Teams that our "One Oxfam" model has streamlined, is helping us to implement the concept of social accountability. Oxfam is a complex global network with independent national member organisations, but our new structures are genuinely helping us to manage, implement, monitor – and thus, be accountable – more simply and effectively.

Please let me go back to where I started – **the safeguarding crisis has prompted us to re-commit to our core values including to gender equality**. Our priority is to improve our accountability in how we help to prevent and address sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse – and on **transforming our culture** so that we model these values in everything we do, both as individuals and as an organisation. We are challenging ourselves on the softer change that is required: addressing the attitudes that individuals hold and how they shape the deep culture of our organization.

At the same time, we are changing the "hardware" – a new safeguarding policy, stronger mechanisms in reporting and investigation, more thorough safeguarding training and recruitment practices. We are increasing the number of dedicated staff and our investment into safeguarding across the confederation. In March 2017 we established an **Independent Commission on Sexual Misconduct, Accountability and Culture Change** led by global women's and human rights leaders. It will help guide us in this change.

In conclusion, we must **increase the pace of this fundamental change** we are making within our own organisation, and drive it with others across the sector. Prioritising social and dynamic accountability must be at the centre of our effort. We will provide a further update on our progress in our next confederation-wide Accountability Report at the end of this year.

Yours sincerely,



Winnie Byanyima
Executive Director, Oxfam International
Nairobi, 29 May 2018

Material changes that have occurred within the organisation since the last report

In the period from our last confederation-wide accountability report, we have continued to implement our global **Oxfam Strategic Plan 2020**, and made strong progress towards our **Oxfam 2020 vision** of a more globally balanced confederation. As of March 2018, 7 regional platforms have been established. Fifty country programmes have transitioned to OI line management as of March 2018, and the remaining 17 are now in the final steps of the process..

In mid-2017, we also implemented a **mid-term review of our Strategic Plan** that focused on progress made in the implementation of our ‘global balance’ and ‘worldwide influencing network’ agenda. Confederation-wide **annual operational planning and reporting** continues, and is considered and approved by the Executive Board and Board of Supervisors at their spring and autumn meetings, respectively.

Affiliates. As noted above, two new affiliates – Oxfam South Africa and Oxfam Brasil – were approved by the Board of Supervisors as full members of the Confederation, with a Turkish women’s rights organisation obtaining observer status in October 2017 and an affiliation process under way in Colombia.

Governance. At board level, 2 Executive Directors of national affiliates and 13 members of the Board of Supervisors have left Oxfam and were replaced by their successors between October 2016 and March 2018. In February 2018, the Chair of the OI Board of Supervisors resigned after being arrested on corruption charges, related to his time as Finance Minister in Guatemala; and the OI Vice Chair was appointed acting Chair as provided for by our constitution.

Management. Our Oxfam International Management Team (OIMT) has seen a few important changes in the first half of 2017. Following the departure of our Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Finance Officer was promoted into this role, with a former International Finance Director at Oxfam Great Britain appointed as Chief Finance Officer. The governance of Oxfam International was strengthened by the recruitment of a full-time senior Head of Governance. We also appointed a Chief Information Officer who is leading the integration of our ICT systems and working closely across the confederation on data privacy issues including General Data Protection Regulations implementation and training. Oversight of our strategy, confederation development and governance has been merged under one Director-level role, to improve integration. At the same time, a full-time Risk Manager position was established. The transition (in September 2017) into a new role of Oxfam Great Britain’s Head of Corporate Accountability, who had been responsible for coordinating Oxfam’s reporting to Accountable Now, resulted in a temporary gap in capacity. However, we now expect to recruit a “strategy and accountability coordinator” in FY18/19.

Safeguarding. In response to the safeguarding crisis in early 2018, we have developed an ambitious [10-point Action Plan](#). Eight workstreams have been set up to deliver our confederation-wide safeguarding strategy, and our safeguarding commitments both internally and externally. As part of this work, a high level Independent Commission, composed of global women’s rights and human rights leaders, has been established to help ensure Oxfam is doing everything it can to be a place of safety and dignity for all women and men who interact with the organization. The Commission will operate independently from Oxfam, and is supported by a senior Chief of Staff reporting to the Commission’s Co-Chairs. Within Oxfam International, a new position of “Associate Director, Safeguarding and Organisational Culture” will be operational as of June 2018.

Income. As a result of the safeguarding crisis, the confederation's global income is expected to reduce in FY 2018/19. A number of bi- and multi-lateral donors temporarily suspended funding or the award of new contracts. Others did not suspend but requested extensive safeguarding and risk management information from Oxfam, and/ or proceeded to verification visits. Some of these measures affected only Oxfam Great Britain or our humanitarian work, while others applied more broadly to the entire confederation. Oxfam now has resolved these concerns with most donors, who expressed recognition of our transparency and professional approach. Some affiliates have also seen a reduction in the number of their public supporters/ regular donors.

Update on Improvement Analysis Recommendations made by the Review Panel

Analysing feedback and complaints

You recommended that Oxfam provide more information on the nature of the complaints made by people affected by our programs, e.g. what percentage related to beneficiary targeting, to sexual harassment or to corruption. You suggested that such information is usefully provided on complaints from supporters/ general public, and to gather information on repeated complaints.

In our Management Response to your improvement analysis in February 2017, we indicated that we would have more future information on feedback and complaints based upon the roll out of a **reflective Program Quality Review** process. This had been delayed due to competing priorities within the system. Roll out has now advanced in the last few months, with the review process being led and coordinated at the regional level by Regional Program Quality Leads.

At this point in time, we do not yet have the consolidated body of evidence to provide updated figures on the number of programmes still lacking a formal mechanism for feedback/ complaints. However, the Program Quality review will tell us what mechanisms are in place. It will also provide **learning on how complaints have been handled, and reflections on how this could be improved**. We are also putting mechanisms in place to be able to identify and aggregate the nature of the complaints through our more **quantitative processes**. Currently, we still capture this for the country as a whole, at a fairly top line level, within our annual Country Operational Report.

In addition, we are now also developing a new **One Program Report**, which is linked to the Program Quality Review. This report will drill down into more detail specifically relating to feedback from our affected communities to our programs, treating it as distinctive from other feedback we receive. This process will be rolled out into the system later in 2018.

Cooperation with partners

You recommended that we provide additional information on how Oxfam conducts a situational analysis to ensure they fully take into account other actors already active in the field and how to best contribute. You also suggested greater clarity on how we ensure in practice that our partners meet high standards of accountability.

In our Management Response to the Improvement Analysis, in February 2017, we described how our **Country Strategy development process**, including a thorough contextual analysis, involves partners at every stage of the process. We also described how partner involvement in the Program Quality Review (PQR) ensured the credibility of those aspects of the PQR concerning the relative roles and

added-value of Oxfam and other actors the areas of work covered by any given program. These processes continue, with partner involvement in interim Country Strategy review processes (where this review is taking place) and the PQR being rolled out across the Oxfam programs.

We also mentioned the piloting of our **Program Leadership Journey**, a program design and development capacity building initiative involving both staff and partners, which is now moving from piloting to implementation in a number of countries.

In addition to these ongoing initiatives, we are also gearing up for a big push on **improving our partnership approaches** in 2018-19. We have laid the foundation for this with a strategic collaboration agreement with the Partnership Brokers' Association (PBA). We have already worked with PBA to deliver training for key partnership focal points from staff across 5 of our 7 regions. These have gone on to design interventions to improve our partnering practice across these regions, accompanied by PBA, over the coming financial year (for example, the Asia region are conducting a strategic review of their country strategies and operating models through the lens of partnership and involving partners). Ensuring increased mutual accountability is at the heart of these initiatives. In addition, tools and guidance on good partnership from across the confederation have been gathered and reviewed, and these will also be packaged, tested and adapted in support of improved partnering practice.

Publishing and analysing incidents of corruption

You recommended that Oxfam provide information on whether and how management responds to incidents / cases of (suspected) corruption throughout the whole confederation. You also suggested to provide information on the number and kind of incidents of corruption on an annual basis.

In the current system, any corruption case implicating an Oxfam member of staff is reported to the manager next in line. In the case of operations in countries and regions, **cases are managed by affiliate or country teams**, with involvement of the line managers as needed; and reported to the Oxfam legal entity registered in the country concerned (the "executing affiliate") – as well as, where relevant, to the affiliate(s) funding the specific project (the "partner affiliate(s)").

All cases are registered in the affiliates' case management system, which at this point is not yet being consolidated into a One Oxfam case management system to include all allegations and their follow up. Thus, information on corruption incidents/ cases is gathered by individual affiliates as part of annual reporting to their stakeholders. Agreement has been reached recently among affiliates and Oxfam International to build a joint mechanism for sharing such data, and **potential collective reporting systems will be further explored**. A further update on this will be provided in our next full accountability report.