

INGO Accountability Charter
c/o International Civil Society Centre
Agricolastraße 26
10555 Berlin, Germany

Innsbruck, 13 January 2015

Response to Independent Review Panel Feedback of 09 December 2014

Dear INGO Accountability Charter,

Thank you for the feedback from the Independent Review Panel on our 2013 accountability report. We are pleased that the panel found our second accountability report to be good and comprehensive, and that we achieved improvements over last year. We believe this improvement reflects how we are learning from the panel's valuable feedback and applying what we have learned in our management processes.

We are also encouraged that the panel recognised SOS for good practice in several different areas, including managing partnerships, managing our impact on local communities, promoting life-long learning within the organisation, and ensuring ethical fundraising practices.

However, the panel's feedback on the areas where SOS can improve – its 'Improvement Analysis' – is especially valuable to us. Our governance bodies will carefully review the panel's recommendations to determine which areas can be addressed and in which timeframe. Some of the panel's suggestions are already prioritised and in process, for example:

- We are very pleased that Herman-Gmeiner Fonds Deutschland e.V. – our largest fundraising member association – has decided to apply for Charter membership in 2015. Their participation represents a first step towards wider federation reporting, as recommended by the panel.
- Efficiency and federation cohesion are key factors that are being evaluated through a new project called "Cooperation in the federation" that began in 2014. Input and feedback collected from all member associations will form the basis for updating our SOS Children's Village International (=federation) statutes and high-level policies. In the next report we will be able to share our first experiences with how the feedback from the member associations is being used to improve the way actors in the federation collaborate with each other.
- The establishment of the global Integrity & Compliance Unit, which also includes the task of setting up a whistle-blowing process, are of high organisational priority for 2015 and beyond. In 2014 the initial concept was further developed and revised. It will now be implemented in 2015. As the unit set-up only just started, we will be able to report on substantial progress in our report about the year 2015.

It should be mentioned that 2014 was still a year of transition and restructuring for SOS. Therefore, some initiatives could not progress at the pace we had hoped – the establishment of the Integrity & Compliance Unit being one example. But I am happy to report that most of the key roles in our new General Secretariat organisational structure have now been filled and our reorganisation is nearing completion, so we will soon be in a position to measure results against expectations. We look forward to presenting these outcomes in our 2014 and 2015 reports.

We welcome the possibility that we might move towards a two-year reporting cycle. Even with the rapid pace of change in management structures that we have been pursuing, significant progress takes time. A two-year reporting cycle would ensure that there is less duplication and more focus on material progress in our reports.

Once again, thank you for the detailed and valuable panel feedback, which helps us further develop our organisation and continually improve our standards of accountability, transparency and efficiency. Many thanks to the Secretariat of the INGO Accountability Charter for their continuous support in this process.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Pichler
CEO