

# Annual Report 2013



## Foreword by the Chair

"2013 has been a year of good progress for the INGO Accountability Charter. Important new Members like BRAC, Islamic Relief and Terre des Hommes have joined, broadening and diversifying the reach of the Charter. A network of leading NGO accountability bodies across the world has been started with a view to building greater global convergence of different codes. New formats for systematic exchange of expertise among Charter Members were successfully introduced.



2014 will be a critical year to reap the Charter's full potential in providing global guidance for CSO accountability. While much progress has been achieved, the sheer number of accountability systems with different referencing language and reporting formats is beginning to undermine their very effectiveness. Accountability needs to remain a succinct, easily understood and relevant driver to effectively assure and drive the quality of our work.

Against this background our priority is to start implementing the *Global Standard* initiative, building a consensus as to what constitutes the core of CSO accountability with our partners in Africa, Asia, Australia, North and Latin America. We look forward to implementing these important next steps with your support and expertise in the coming year."

Jeremy Hobbs, Chair INGO Accountability Charter

## Charter Highlights 2013

### Global Outreach

In 2013, BRAC and Islamic Relief joined the Charter as new Members. Jemilah Mahmood, a highly respected CSO representative from Malaysia, was elected to the Charter Board. Tony Tujan, Director of the IBON Foundation in the Philippines, strengthened the Independent Review Panel's global view, and we started to systematically engage with CSO accountability networks across the world in the Global Standard project.

### Improved Quality Assessment

While the Independent Review Panel previously assessed Members' accountability reports with a particular view on completeness of disclosure (GRI approach), it has now moved to a more qualitatively based assessment of accountability systems working in practice.

### Strengthened Community of Practice

Collective accountability expertise among Charter Members is impressive. In 2013, we started to systematically tap into this resource by offering four webinars and access to five Peer Advice Groups. Participation in the webinars and groups allowed our Members to learn from top experts in our sector and to engage in a lively community of practice.

## Strategic Objectives 2014-2015

### Midterm Strategy

In a midterm review of the Charter's Five Years Strategy (2011-2015), the Board acknowledged that significant progress has been achieved in the following areas: gaining important large new Members while albeit losing some smaller ones; establishing a particularly strong compliance practice; implementing a high level of management proficiency; revising and updating all policies and constitutional documents; and systematically reaching out to the Global South. For the remaining period of the Five Years Strategy, the Board decided to focus on the following three strategic objectives:



*The QuAM initiative would use the Global Standard to share its experience and learn from other partners on how NGO accountability can be improved and promoted to uphold the credibility of the NGO Sector in Uganda and beyond."*

Bonnie Kiconco Mutungi  
Head of **QuAM** (Uganda)

### 1) Aligning CSO accountability globally

One of the overarching Charter objectives is to create greater alignment in CSO accountability practice. Reducing the current fragmentation will lead to significant efficiency gains and more meaningful transparency. The Charter therefore initiated a partnership with CSO accountability net-

works from Asia (PCNC, VANI), Africa (QuAM), Australia (ACFID), Latin America (Rendir Cuentas) and North America (InterAction). The aim is to devise a collectively agreed *Global Standard for Core CSO Accountability* and to reach optimal alignment for its

implementation. You can find more information [here](#).



### 2) Raising CSO voice in public accountability debate

The voice of civil society seems to be strangely absent from intense public debates on CSO accountability. The Charter, being the only

global, cross-sectoral and fully comprehensive CSO accountability network, is ideally positioned to fill this gap. Together with you we

want to develop and implement a communication strategy, addressing the most important issues from a CSO perspective.

### 3) Further strengthen Charter quality

In 2014 the Charter text will be revised to condense passages on universal principles, introduce important missing principles like environ-

mental sustainability and make the entire document more accessible in format and language. Building on that, a Charter Working

Group will draft Minimum Standards to complement the commitment to the Principles with clear implementation parameters.

## Charter Activities 2013

### Results of 2013 Report Assessment

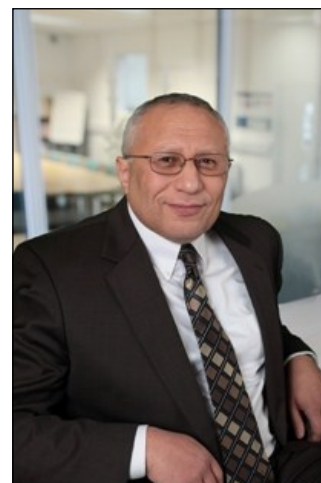
First of all, a great big thank you to the highly engaged Independent Review Panel members, all of whom spent a significant amount of time sharing their collective expertise with your organisations.

As in previous years, the Panel found that the quality of reports is generally improving, demonstrating greater institutional commitment and more evidence that

mechanisms are working in practice. The GAP / Progress Tables at the end of each report underpin this view.

The Panel also found however that many reporting organisations do not make full use of accountability as a cross-functional driving force for continuous quality improvements. All too often accountability sits in silos and the Charter report is not used to

trigger cross functional discussions about what the organisation wants to be held accountable against and what that means for budgeting, strategy, communications, fundraising, sustainability management etc. Members are encouraged to get accountability out of the defensive and use it actively to continuously drive and monitor organisational development.



"The INGO Charter has been vital in establishing standards of accountability for the sector and providing Members with the capacity and skills to deliver accountability in their work. Islamic Relief Worldwide is therefore proud to support the work and values of the Charter, which resonate with Islamic Relief's own faith-based values of excellence, sincerity, and accountability in practice."

Mohamed Ashmawey,  
CEO

**Islamic Relief  
Worldwide**



## Charter Community of Practice

### Annual Workshop: How to be effectively accountable for CSO advocacy work

The annual Charter workshop provided a very good opportunity for 22 peer experts from 16 Charter Member organisations to exchange views on how to best account for CSO advocacy work. While most CSOs have stepped up their advo-

cacy work lately, they struggle with how to effectively account for it. Against this background, presentations from 11 organisations, on the successes and failures they encountered while developing better accountability mechanisms, were par-

ticularly interesting. The group agreed on a first draft for the key parameters of good accountability practice for advocacy work at the end of the workshop.

Visit [our website](#) for further information and the outcome document.

### Webinars

With generous pro bono support from CBM, the Charter introduced a series of webinars, allowing Charter Members to profit more systematically from the wealth of collective knowledge. In virtual sessions, each one and a half hours long, nine experts shared their best insights on key is-

ssues of accountability such as: establishing an effective complaints handling mechanism; mastering the challenges and opportunities of information disclosure; and how to better embed accountability into an organisation's DNA.

Evaluations conducted in 2013 of the four

webinars showed great appreciation for the opportunity to exchange in confidence how to best tackle common challenges with peer experts. The series will be continued in 2014.

See our webinar programme for 2013 and 2014 [here](#).

### Peer Advice Groups

Differing from webinars which are virtual, one-off meetings with numerous participants, Peer Advice Groups offer smaller groups an opportunity to tackle issues in more depth and to continue their exchange over a longer period of time. Currently

we have Peer Advice Groups on the following topics:

- Anti-Corruption
- Complaints Handling Mechanism
- Governance
- Organisational Learning
- Programme Effectiveness





## Charter Updates

### IATI membership

To demonstrate and deepen its commitment to transparency, a necessary building block for accountability, the Charter Company Board decided to become a member of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) as of January 2014. This commits the Charter Company to promote the IATI standard and allows us to participate in its further developments to best meet CSO needs.

### Website Re-launch

After intense work, and with generous pro bono support from World Vision, our website ([www.ingoaccountabilitycharter.org](http://www.ingoaccountabilitycharter.org)) was re-launched in September. All content was revised, more pictures and quotes introduced and accessibility of information significantly improved. As a result we have noted a lot more traffic on the website and hope that the re-launch has improved the exchange of information among existing Members.



*"Our demand for more accountability from governments and the corporate sector is credible only if we are prepared to hold ourselves accountable to high standards. Greenpeace strongly supports the INGO Accountability Charter due to its high accountability standards, comprehensiveness and global nature."*

Kumi Naidoo  
 International Executive Director  
 Greenpeace International



### New Charter Coordinator

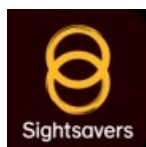
As of August 2013, Merle Rutz took over Åsa Månsson's tasks and responsibilities as Charter Coordinator. Merle has grown fast into her new role and Åsa is now in charge of fundraising for the International Civil Society Centre.

*"Accountability to all our stakeholders is a fundamental value for CBM. The INGO Charter challenges us to continuously review our standards and to think of accountability from many different aspects. Through this important tool for CBM to not only learn from our peers but to also challenge others in the sector to become inclusive of persons with disabilities."*

Dave McComiskey  
 President and CEO  
 CBM International



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\* Affiliate Member

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Picture of Jeremy Hobbs on title page:

Photograph courtesy of IISD/Earth Negotiations  
Bulletin (<http://www.iisd.ca/ymb/afconference/>)