

# Accountable Now



**Annual Report 2016**  
**Overview 2016**  
**Outlook 2017**

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Dear Friends,



2016 has been a challenging year marked by significant political disruption and rising populism: Civil society organisations (CSOs) around the world are working hard to maintain an open dialogue and make progress towards equality, inclusion and sustainability. At Accountable Now we work to support these efforts by strengthening the legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness of CSOs. At the same time, we acknowledge the shortcomings of our sector as well as our organisations. In particular we recognized the need to redouble our efforts to connect with the people and partners we work with.

Throughout 2016 we explored new opportunities for interaction in the digital age in order to improve this connectedness. Together with feedback specialists and great partners from international and national CSOs, digital campaign organisations and academia, we delineated a newly emerging approach to CSO stakeholder relationships. We call it people-powered accountability as it builds on real-time, two-way dialogue between CSOs and key stakeholders in order to leverage impact. It will be at the heart of Accountable Now's practice going forward.

Our Members can only be held to account if their accountability commitments are well known to the public. With this in mind, we re-branded and changed our name from the tongue twister INGO Accountability Charter to Accountable Now. Fresh colours and a new logo illustrate to the public our promise of CSO accountability.

In a globally connected world in which CSOs are increasingly challenged it is important to speak with a unified voice. Agreeing on the 1st draft of the Global Standard on CSO Accountability with our nine accountability network partners from across the world was a great step in this direction.

Overall 2016 was a year with demonstrable progress towards ensuring that CSOs connect better with people and partners, making their promises well known to the public and aligning voices globally in challenging times for civil society.

**Brendan Gormley**  
Board Chair

**Karenina Schröder**  
Executive Director

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## People-Powered Accountability Project

**Accountability is still far too often only associated with report writing. In the digital age, however, accountability means the ability to manage real-time, interactive stakeholder relationships to advance collective impact.**



Together with a great group of people from across the globe, we identified a **newly emerging accountability paradigm**. At its heart is an outward-focused culture and proactive staff who take into account what stakeholders want and offer to contribute. When done well, it allows CSOs to adapt more quickly, achieve more and ensure co-owned impact.



We have summarized the results of this work in a [video](#), an [interactive report](#), numerous [blog posts](#) and very practical [action guides](#) for Chief Executive Officers, Campaign/Programme Directors and other roles.

### First results

► Our work has significantly shaped the [Global Standard for CSO Accountability](#). [Systematic feedback loops](#) are at the core of this new standard. Many [Accountable Now Members](#) found the new approach to accountability timely and inspiring, with some immediately integrating it into their business plans.

### Plans for 2017

► We will review our Accountability Commitments and Reporting Requirements in light of this newly emerging practice. We will also start building a community of practice around it, testing how to adapt it to the needs of digital CSOs.

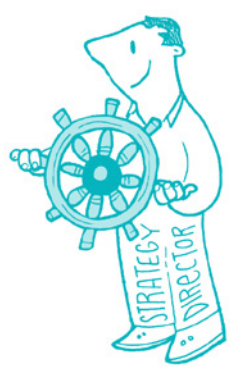


# Action Guides for People-Power in CSOs

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**30 practical suggestions**  
**70 examples from across the sector**  
**6 CSO functions**

CSOs must become **facilitators and amplifiers** of other people's voices and actions – it is not only the right thing to do, it is also the **smartest!** Leveraging collective impact with others is no longer a choice. To do so, you need to know what people and partners think about you. Establish your Net Promoter Score! We have developed Action Guides for six CSO functions in order to support the journey towards people-powered CSOs:



As **Strategy Director** it is your role to determine the optimal mixture of bottom-up people power and top-down directives:

- Crowd-source strategy like Restless Development, whose project "The Big Conversation" included 5,000 people from across the globe.
- Set clear rules for people's engagement, a tactic that Avaaz uses by asking their members if their feedback is a binding mandate or simply guidance.

As **Board Member** you still set strategy, establish effective structures, monitor progress and manage risks. But you also need to:

- Follow the footsteps of 350.org by putting impact before organisational growth.
- Build a digitally-attuned governance culture similar to that of Wikimedia.

For all functions and examples go to [accountablenow.org/cso-action-guides/](http://accountablenow.org/cso-action-guides/)

# New Name, New Logo

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Our old name *INGO Accountability Charter* was never easy to say or remember. It also increasingly failed to reflect the dynamics of our accountability practice – seeking stakeholder engagement to constantly improve impact. In June 2016 we changed our name into a call to action: **Accountable Now**

The new strapline **Global Standards Local Trust** captures the key message of connecting our globally acting Member Organisations with local stakeholder agendas. A new logo and visual identity underscores this fresh promise for all the world to see. We expect increased recognition of our brand and hence the promise to which we and our Members want to

be held to account. Twitter engagement under [@Accountable Now](https://twitter.com/AccountableNow) has further supported this public outreach.

Members have been provided with guidelines and tools to promote their Accountable Now Membership more successfully. We developed a set of brief text blocks to strengthen our collective voice and encourage recognition and understanding of what we do. One example of our unified wording that captures our core message is:

**Accountable Now is a global platform that supports civil society organisations (CSOs) to be transparent, responsive to stakeholders and focused on delivering impact.**



## Accountable Now

GLOBAL STANDARDS  
LOCAL TRUST

### Plans for 2017

- We shall further support our Members by proudly communicating their Membership as an emphatic promise of their accountability.
- Social media activities will be increased and a more interactive and user-friendly website shall invite people to share their thoughts, concerns, ideas and more.



# Making Accountability a Leadership Priority

Accountability is our license to operate and our opportunity to make better informed management decisions, yet the responsibility to implement accountability practices often rests with a compliance officer or accountant. This is not where it should be. Hence, Accountable Now has continued to conduct **bi-lateral meetings between our Members' most senior managers and the Independent Review Panel**. This gives us a chance to engage senior executives in discussions around the strategic value of people-powered accountability while also making us aware of the key concerns that CEOs have regarding accountability. This year many of those concerns were focused on closer CSO collaboration and appropriate governance in times of globalisation, greater empowerment and increased speed.



## Plans for 2017

► We will engage CSO management on how to make strategic use of accountability by establishing collaborative relationships with people and partners for the purposes of increasing agility, adaptation and ownership.

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"As ICSOs advocate for more transparency and accountability from governments and international institutions, we must also be open to scrutiny. Those who fund us are demanding it, those who work for us need it to do their jobs better, and those we seek to serve can have greater influence to increase our impact. At Plan International, we've made a big commitment to strengthening our corporate accountability – it's one of our top global priorities for the year ahead to help make us more efficient and improve our practices. And it's also part of our newly defined organisational values. Our membership of Accountable Now will help us achieve the level of accountability we need to become one of the most trusted organisations in the sector at a time when we have set ourselves a bold and ambitious new purpose."

Anne-Birgitte Albrectsen, CEO,  
**Plan International**



"As we witness more governments relinquishing civic authority to private industry and rolling back regulatory oversight, it is more important than ever that we ensure accountability and transparency. We must strengthen our role in society by challenging the powers that be and give voice to the people. At Greenpeace International, we feel strongly that we all must be accountable for our actions; this is why Accountable Now is so important to us."

Bunny McDiarmid and Jennifer Morgan,  
Executive Directors, **Greenpeace International**



# Workshop & Webinars

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## The Future of Governance

How do we ensure effective and consistent governance while at the same time globalising and empowering decentralised parts of an organisation? How do we govern well when more and more people want to have a say but fewer and fewer want to take on full responsibility? This year's **workshop** brought together more than 20 ICSOs to rethink the **effectiveness of governance in a globally networked world**. We also invited Wikipedia and 350.org to share their views from a digitally native perspective.

Instead of focussing on the improvement of existing structures, we started the discussion by defining what governance wants to achieve and then worked backwards. What if governance could be distributed beyond the usual bodies? Can we create a culture of governance throughout the organisation? What if we managed to make it dynamic, engaging, light-touch and fluid? The group came up with seven practical ideas on how to shape CSO governance in the future.

"Thank you very much for the wonderful organisation of the workshop. I came back home with a lot of things to reflect on and to communicate about. I am preparing a small presentation for our upcoming Board meeting and also for our annual international Association Coordinators meeting."

Chrysafio Arvaniti, Association Coordinator,  
**Médecins Sans Frontières Greece**

## Webinars in 2016

- Data Protection & Data Security
- How to use Accountable Now Membership for Fundraising
- Comparing Accountability Performance across a sample of 40 CSOs
- Learning good Accountability Practice from the Global South
- Digital connectivity a game changer for stakeholder relationships?

You can find more information as well as recordings and results of these webinars on our website.



## In 2017

► We are planning a workshop on how to keep up with the customer feedback revolution in CSOs. Webinars will include, among others, *What is "accountability" in the eyes of today's youth? and New ways of measuring impact in the digital age.*

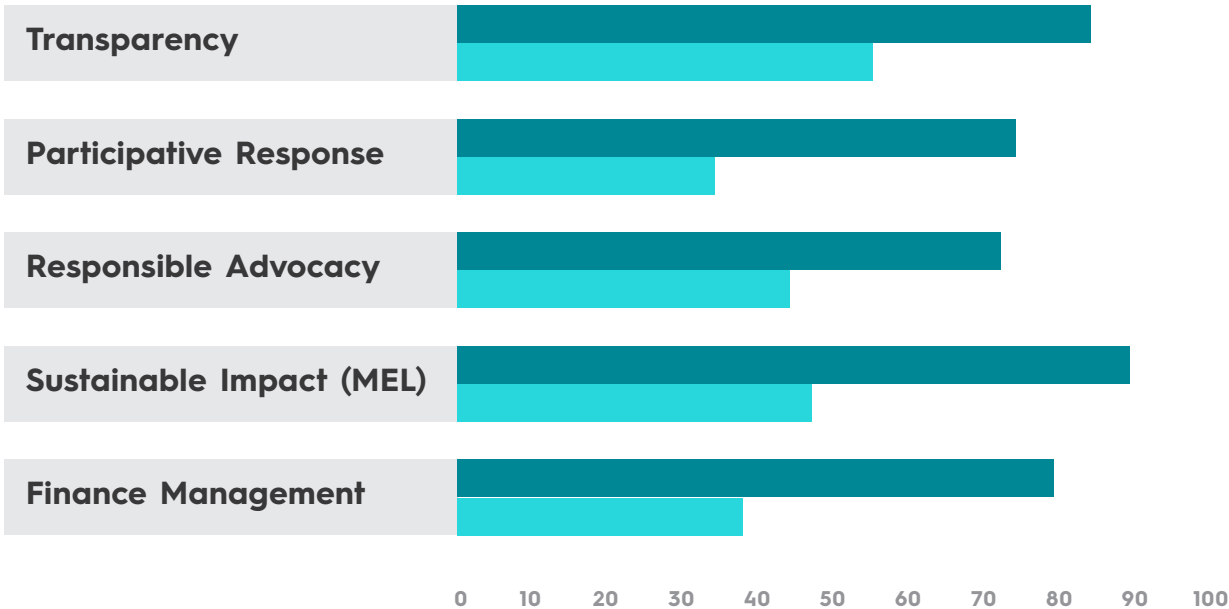
# Comparative Survey on CSO Accountability

We commissioned the direct impact group to perform a comparative study on the accountability practices of 40 international CSOs. Their findings revealed some of the severe challenges we face as a sector. Of the 40 CSOs that were approached with an inquiry, **only three got back** in time, despite the fact that the requested information was relatively straightforward and covered by any open information policies. However, the study also shows some great examples of best practice and provides concrete proof for the significant role leadership plays in driving top accountability performance.



## Key Findings Overall by the direct impact group

**Members**  
**Non-Members**



# Accountability Assessment Focused on Engagement Practices

**For the further development of our reporting and vetting practices, our work on People-Powered Accountability must become timelier and more focused on stakeholder feedback and engagement.**

## First results

- ▶ The Secretariat and Panel now complements its review report with a quick check on Member websites and select social media channels.
- ▶ More Members have been moved to the interim reporting cycle with full reports due only every two years in recognition of their improved accountability performance.
- ▶ A Review Committee of Member representatives has begun to develop with us a revised draft of our Accountability Commitments reflecting on what we learnt in the Global Standard project for the AGM in June 2017 to approve.
- ▶ The Panel identified main improvement areas for (i) closing the feedback loop with stakeholders, (ii) collaborating with partners and (iii) adding value to what people do in order to improve their lives.



## Plans for 2017

- ▶ We will align our Accountability Commitments and compliance framework with the aforementioned Committee to better reflect key outcomes of the Global Standard for CSO Accountability and Digital Accountability projects.
- ▶ We will develop a reporting framework for smaller / national CSOs.
- ▶ We will finalise our concept for online reporting – with actual implementation planned for 2018.



# Good Practice from Member Organisations

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Based on all [Accountability Reports](#), both full and interim, that have been submitted by our Members in 2016, the Independent Review Panel has identified several examples of good practice. Some of them are highlighted below:



## Oxfam mainstreams accountability across the organisation

In the process of preparing their Accountability Reports, Oxfam developed an organisation-wide Accountability Framework that provides an index of all relevant internal policies and procedures.

## SOS Children's Villages raises awareness on accountability

The Management Team of SOS Children's Villages leads the process of preparing their Accountability Reports. The reports, along with the Panel feedback, are then used to raise awareness internally and initiate dialogue on the importance of accountability.

## Educo communicates their progress on accountability

To communicate their global accountability efforts, Educo produces a user-friendly executive summary of their accountability reports in order to visualise their performance against the 10 Accountability Commitments.

## Islamic Relief handles complaints to empower stakeholders

To make beneficiaries active and powerful recipients, Islamic Relief takes complaints very seriously and has developed a Complaints Handling and Response Toolkit to enable their staff to effectively respond to negative feedback.

## Transparency International tracks organisational impact

To improve organisational performance and anti-corruption impact, Transparency International has developed a highly participatory, movement-wide impact monitoring approach that consists of an impact matrix and in-depth impact assessments.

## Sightsavers contributes to partners' sustainability

Through their partnership framework, Sightsavers develops appropriate partnerships and holds a regular review of their performance and sustainability. All of this is monitored via an interactive internet-based dashboard.

## CARE shares collective knowledge with the sector

To share their collective knowledge not only internally but also with a wider audience, CARE has an open Electronic Evaluation Library which includes findings, lessons learned and recommendations of external evaluations.

# Accountability is Global

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Our goals are global and so must be our accountability. 2016 saw further steps in this direction:



Together with eight accountability networks from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and North and South America we identified key elements of what makes a good CSO in different parts of the world. The biggest achievement was to bring this wealth of information into a very succinct, plain language [Global Standard for CSO Accountability](#). The Standard offers a strong narrative on what our sector wants to achieve, what differentiates our work from businesses or governments and how to hold us to account. It benefited significantly from in-depth bilateral consultations with 20 Accountable Now Members at the international, regional and national level.



Furthermore, we recruited two new members for the Independent Review Panel from India and Palestine, we translated our Strategy Beyond 2015 into Arabic and we started a blog series that offers interesting perspectives on accountability from both the Global South and North. We have also seen CSOs in the Global South express interest in becoming Members of Accountable Now.

"The Global Standard is action oriented and thought provoking – definitely triggering the right sort of discussions in Sightsavers."

Alicia Cummins, Head of PS2 Operations and Planning, Sightsavers



## Plans for 2017

- We will help finalise and launch the Global Standard – including all guidance materials – and rally for its recognition by other accountability standards, CSOs, governments and donors.
- We hope to attract new Members from the Global South and enter into further strategic partnerships with CSOs from across the world in order to build a community of practice around the people-powered approach to accountability that is codified in the Global Standard.

In 2017 the [Board](#) created a compelling vision and strategy to strengthen Accountable Now's brand and scope in the sector.

The Secretariat would like to deeply thank all Trustees of the Accountable Now Board who provided very hands-on strategic and operational advice throughout the year. The Trustees' self-evaluation for 2016 agreed on having determined a cohesive vision, strategic objectives, and policies based on comprehensive information. However, Trustees felt that more could be done supporting Accountable Now via fundraising and outreach.

In 2016 we also applied to the UK Charity Commission for charity status. A General Meeting in December 2016 passed a special resolution to amend the Articles of Association and Memorandum of Association in this regard. We expect to become an official charity in spring 2017. This will allow us to receive charitable funding directly and further strengthen our credibility.

## The current composition of the Board is as follows:

- Brendan Gormley**, Chair <sup>1</sup>
- Bettie van Straaten**, Treasurer, CFO/Director: Operations, CIVICUS <sup>2</sup>
- Caroline Harper**, Vice Chair, CEO Sightsavers International <sup>3</sup>
- Clare Doube**, Director of Strategy and Evaluation, Amnesty International <sup>4</sup>
- Elie Gasagara**, Partnership Leader, Global Accountability, World Vision International <sup>5</sup>
- Janet Dalziell**, Director of Global Development, Greenpeace International <sup>6</sup>
- Janet Naumi Mawiyoo**, CEO, Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF); Chair, Viwango <sup>7</sup>
- Miklos Marschall**, Deputy Managing Director, Transparency International <sup>8</sup>
- Perry Maddox**, COO, Restless Development <sup>9</sup>
- Rosa Inés Ospina**, Co-Director, Rendir Cuentas; National Director, Red de ONG por la Transparencia <sup>10</sup>



The real drivers of Accountable Now's strategy are the [25 Member Organisations](#). Together we strive to be transparent, responsive to stakeholders and focused on delivering impact! While HelpAge decided to leave Accountable Now at the end of the year, two new Members joined in 2016:

- **ADRA Adventist Development and Relief Agency**, a globally acting organisation working on a variety of topics such as disaster response and community health
- **MIO-ECSDE**, a federation of over 130 Mediterranean CSOs working in the fields of environmental policy and development

## Full Members



## Affiliate Members





# Independent Review Panel + Accountable Now Secretariat

**The Independent Review Panel** is vital to the credibility and integrity of Accountable Now. They assess individually and critically if our Members are in compliance with the 10 Accountability Commitments. They are also the final instance for handling complaints filed against Accountable Now Members. In 2017 Panel members will also play an important role in reviewing our Accountability Commitments and reporting requirements.

- Mihir Bhatt** <sup>1</sup> (India), Director and founder of the All India Disaster Mitigation Institute
- Rhonda Chapman** <sup>2</sup> (Australia), independent consultant specialising in the review, assessment and capacity building of CSOs
- John Clark** <sup>3</sup> (United Kingdom), Chair

- of the international anti-corruption NGO Partnership for Transparency Fund, on the supervisory board of the European Center for Not-for-profit Law, on the advisory Council for the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law.
- Louise James** <sup>4</sup> (United Kingdom), Global Programmes Director for Accenture Development Partnerships
- Jane Kiragu** <sup>5</sup> (Kenya), Human rights lawyer and Advocate of the High Court of Kenya, Managing Director of Satima Consultants Ltd.
- Nora Lester Murad** <sup>6</sup> (Palestine), Co-founder of Dalia Association, Aid Watch Palestine and independent researcher
- Michael Roeskau** <sup>7</sup> (Germany), former Director of Development Co-operation at OECD/DAC, retired from Federal Ministry of Finance, Germany
- Saroeun Soeung** <sup>8</sup> (Cambodia), Executive Director of the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)



**Accountable Now Secretariat**

**Karenina Schröder** Executive Director

**Merle Rutz** Programme Manager

**Mahmoud Farag** Programme Officer

**Anna Schneider** Programme Officer

Company Secretary:

**Thomas Price**  
Assistant Legal Counsel  
Amnesty International

# Annual Accounts<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Accounts still need to be audited, all figures may be subject to change. The final audit report will be published [online](#).

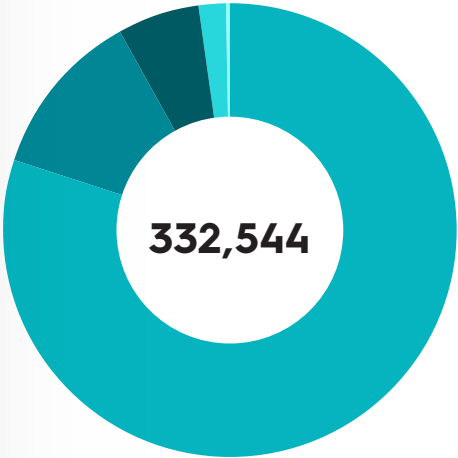
Income continued on a positive trajectory, due mainly to external funding received for the Global Standard and People-Powered Accountability project (58,985 €) as well as additional income from new Members and higher income from existing Members (due to higher turnover) which brought in an extra 26,500 € compared to 2015.

An overall 2016 income surplus of 60,405 € as compared to 2015 is estimated (unaudited). The total charity funds stands at 135,548 € as of 31 December 2016, which is well within the require-

ments of Accountable Now's Reserves Policy. An additional 21,692 € were spent on Communications compared to 2015 due to the rebranding process and new website development. 16,899 € were spent on legal advice for the application process of Accountable Now as a registered charity in the United Kingdom.

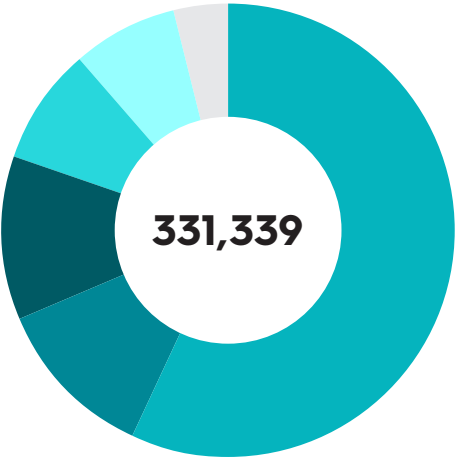
## Income January - December 2016

**Membership Fees**  
**Global Standard**  
**People-Powered Accountability**



## Expenditure January - December 2016

**Administration / Staff**  
**Global Standard**  
**People-Powered Accountability**





# Acknowledgements

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**We are very grateful for the 2016 support of all Trustees as well as the Independent Review Panel, whose honorary assessments and reviews help make civil society to be more accountable and more focused. Also, we would like to say THANK YOU to the following organisations and individuals:**

**Amnesty International Secretariat** for hosting our board meeting in London.

**Aurore Lechien and Grégoire Vanderheyden** for their creative design of the new Accountable Now logo and brand elements.

**Christoph J Kellner** for his extraordinary design of the People-Power for Social Change video and the supporting graphics.

**Feedback Labs Collaboration Fund** for co-funding our Digital Accountability project and for inviting Accountable Now to their Summit in London.

**Gilles Van Handenhove**, Brand and Communications Officer, **and Tim Van Der Veer**, Head of Brand and Digital, at Oxfam International for their continuous support and advice on the new name and logo and their inspiration and guidance during the creation of Accountable Now's modern brand.

**Greenpeace Netherlands** for hosting our 2016 Annual Members' Workshop.

**Heike Böhme** for sharing her expert knowledge on data protection and security with us and other Members.

**Markus Hesse, Guna Fernandez and the direct impact group team** for their comparative survey on the excellence of CSO accountability and their continuous support for our Member Organisations in improving their accountability performance.

**Rachel Zutshi from CIVICUS** for helping us professionalise our financial reporting.

**Rendir Cuentas, the Balkan Civil Society Development Network and the NGO Quality Assurance Mechanism (QuAM)** for hosting our Project Partners' meetings in Colombia, Serbia and Uganda.

**The Rockefeller Foundation** for hosting our meeting at the superb Bellagio Center and for supporting the travel costs of some participants.

**The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)** for funding the Global Standard for CSO Accountability project.

**World Vision UK** for hosting our Annual General Meeting.

**The various contributors to our blog** for challenging our understanding of accountability issues and for providing great insights.

Last but not least, the biggest thank you goes to **our Members** for their commitment to accountability and for "walking the talk!"







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### Copyright

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