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## Interim Report to Accountable Now Independent Review Panel (September 2020) Acknowledgment of Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

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Ms Neshikj,

Following our recent exchange with two members of the Independent Review Panel – Ms Snježana Bokulić and Ms Elodie Le Grand – on the feedback provided by the Panel on Oxfam International’s latest Interim Report to Accountable Now, I would like to also acknowledge our appreciation in writing. We are grateful for the thorough review of our Report and both the positive feedback and the critical reflection on where we can do better.

We expect to further progress our **model and presence review** and related organizational change processes over the coming 2 financial years. Our global board meetings in March 2021 have taken important decisions with regards to our global governance reform and to create greater efficiency in the allocation of collective resources across the global organization. While our ‘horizon planning’ process continues to evolve in an iterative manner, agreement on several core and shared priorities will guide our implementation of the [Oxfam Global Strategic Framework](#) in the coming 2 years and as we adjust our programming to ensure relevance, resilience and impact in a ‘COVID world’.

With regards to **responsible stewardship for the environment**, the Global Green Team is a network of staff from across the Oxfam Confederation who have mobilized to support us in ‘walking the talk’ on climate justice also within our own organization. ‘Green Teams United’ has currently approx. 70 members and, while informal and operating with limited resources, is offering important ideas and inputs. Results from a #flyless survey are currently being analyzed and will feed into the development of an Oxfam Travel Policy. The Team is also reviewing commitments to reducing our environmental footprint as made in Affiliate plans for FY21/22 and FY22/23 to help share best practice while identifying areas where additional support would be needed. It has also collected examples of environmental policies already existing in some Affiliates. At the OI Secretariat, the practice of only undertaking essential travel (e.g. related to humanitarian response), adopted by necessity following the outbreak of the COVID pandemic, will continue in FY21/ 22 with any travel budget being administered through a common pool (vs being at the discretion of individual staff or managers).

With regards to **stakeholder feedback and engagement**, as noted in our Interim Report we consider this to be a continuously evolving effort and practice. A wide range of materials has been developed around Oxfam’s minimum requirements for MEL and Social Accountability to promote collaborative and effective, results-focused, and accountable MEL and Social Accountability practice in Oxfam Programs and Projects implemented at country level.

In response to the query from the Panel on whether some of the guidance documents that Oxfam is providing to country and regional offices could be made available, we are happy to share our Oxfam Program Quality Standards (in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#)) as well our [Guidance on Community Feedback Mechanisms](#).

In response to the Panel's question on whether 'Your Word Counts' is also accessible to people without access to mobile devices and/ or whether alternative ways of using it have been considered, we would like to clarify that this mechanism is used by Oxfam staff (and some of our partners) to enter feedback received, not by the community members themselves. Where staff do not have access to relevant devices while in the field, they would record the feedback and enter it later on desktop computers in their office. Thus, whatever channel is used to provide and collective feedback (hotline, face to face, suggestion box etc.), it all gets inputted through the YWC system by staff.

We gratefully acknowledge the positive feedback from the Independent Review Panel on the progress we have made in improving our **safeguarding policies, standard and practice**. This remains at the heart of our effort to re-build trust, ensure everyone who comes in contact with Oxfam feels safe and respected, and to be a leader on safeguarding within the sector and beyond. Our Global Safeguarding Taskforce continues to be led by one of our Executive Board members. In response to the Panel's request for us to share some of our One Oxfam Safeguarding Standards and Policies, our [PSEA Policy](#), [Child Safeguarding Policy](#), [Youth Safeguarding Policy](#) and [Digital Safeguarding Policy](#) are available for circulation (and can be shared on request in Arabic, French and Spanish).

We are happy to provide our Oxfam Safeguarding Core Standards to Accountable Now but would request these are not shared publicly at this stage. The same applies to our Safeguarding Standard Operating Procedures, to help us keep survivors safe.

In response to the Panel's query on whether we think relatively low figures in our 6-monthly safeguarding reports could in part be related to a challenge of under-reporting, we are very conscious that this is a risk that exists and have been open and transparent about this. We are happy to share the published research from [Myanmar](#), [Iraq](#) and [Ghana](#) as well as a related [meta-analysis](#) that analysed the barriers against people reporting sexual misconduct, and provided valuable lessons and will help us further improve our reporting systems.

I would like to thank Accountable Now once again for the open conversations that were part of this review process. Please share our thanks also with the members of the Independent Review Panel. We look forward to continuing our exchanges on accountability in and of the INGO sector and how we as Oxfam can contribute to further strengthening this over time.

Sincerely,



Gabriela Bucher

Executive Director, Oxfam international

Nairobi/ Oxford, 24 March 2021