

13 June 2013

Independent Review Panel - Meeting 20 May 2013 in London Letter to the Members in this review round

Dear Arelys Moreno,

In May we as the Charter's *Independent Review Panel* met to discuss the reports that had been submitted since our last meeting in October 2012. We would like to thank you for going through this exercise of reporting against the Charter and recognise the commitment to accountability that this demonstrates. We are now writing to provide feedback on your report.

Since we first started assessing the reports we have noticed a marked **improvement in quality** and an improved commitment to accountability. In the last meetings we reviewed some reports of very good quality. However there is still room for improvement in all reports. Enclosed you will find a collection of what we believe to be **Good Practice** in responding to some of the indicators in the GRI reporting framework, including examples from the reports you have submitted in this round. As we feel that part of our role is to encourage organisational improvement we encourage you to look at this document and see the potential in Members learning from each other.

In addition to responding to the indicators in the GRI reporting framework focused on transparency, we would like to encourage Members to include a qualitative assessment of **whether you are satisfied** with the information you are providing and if not, how you intend to improve. We would like you to consider the questions: *What are the challenges each indicator holds for my organisation and how do we deal with these? Do the systems in place work well? How do they contribute to improving your work?* In the cases where you present hard data (for example on diversity or training hours), please consider the following: *Are we pleased with these numbers? How do we want these to change and what actions can we take to facilitate that?* These kinds of explanations are especially welcome where you present weak results or poor data. We hope that this would also encourage use of the reports to facilitate internal discussion of areas for improvement.

With regard to the **complaints handling mechanism** (indicator NGO2), we would like to remind you that it is now mandatory for Charter Members to have such a mechanism in place. This is at the core of good accountability. Such a mechanism should be open for external and internal complaints, outline a clear process, including a timeframe for resolution, and be easily accessible to the intended users. We saw several good examples in the latest set of reports. The reports would however be enriched by examples of the nature of cases dealt with in any reporting period. We would also encourage members to highlight their Charter membership and the commitments that it represents on their website by uploading the Charter logo and linking to the Charter alongside their complaint handling mechanism.

We understand that it is a challenge for global organisations to report on the operations of national entities, but we strongly encourage you to provide an explanation on the structures and processes you have in place to ensure that **global accountability standards** are upheld at a national level and, if they are not, how you tackle this issue. Many reports are relatively strong on policy but much weaker on evidence and selected examples of how this works in practice. How do you use **lessons learned** to improve your programmes?

We welcome cases where organisations make commitments for the future and identify areas for improvement. The newly introduced **Gap Analysis** table is a useful tool to easily track

commitments and achievements made in your organisation. We have included the commitments we could identify when going through your report and would like to encourage you to keep working with this document and submit it again along with your next report.

Finally we would like to inform you that we have decided to focus our attention to some specific areas in the 2014 review rounds. This will be communicated to the entire membership shortly but we would like to provide you with this information at this point already:

➤ **Policy – practice – assurance**

We can see that the reports are improving with regard to accountability measures you take, but are also interested in getting a better understanding of the extent to which this leads to improvements in performance. In our view many reports are good in providing an overview of policies in place. They are however less strong in showing that these are implemented systematically in practice and often relatively weak when it comes to evidence of assurance. Although we acknowledge that of the three - policy, practice and assurance - that latter is most difficult it is also a very important one and we encourage you to work further on this area.

➤ **Advocacy**

Being adequately accountable for our advocacy work is of crucial importance for the legitimacy of NGOs. Nevertheless many reports are relatively weak in this area. It is not totally clear which processes are in place to arrive at advocacy positions, how partners and other stakeholders are involved, how the correctness of the claim is ensured, if there are clear plans for how to exit a campaign and how lessons learned are feed in to the improvement of further work. We see potential for mutual learning through discussions around these questions and encourage all Members to participate in the Charter's workshop on this topic by the end of this year.

➤ **Communication**

We believe the reports should be written for and actively discussed with your trustees, your staff, partners, beneficiaries and other key stakeholders. Only when people know about your commitments and performance against them will they react and help you to improve even further. Often the reports are addressed to the Panel and any other audience is not immediately evident. Against this backdrop we would also welcome more information on how you handle the results of the reporting process, how they are discussed within the organisation, whether they facilitate discussion of areas for improvement, if they lead to an agreed action plan and how they are brought to the attention of the Board.

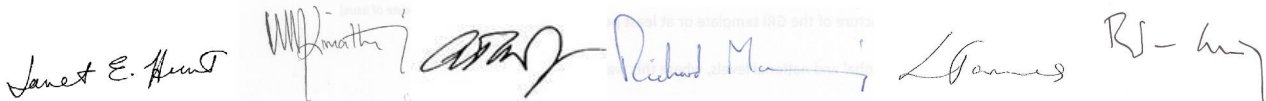
Organisation-specific feedback to Panos Network

We acknowledge that your organisation has gone through a tough year having to close down one of your institutes. However we would have liked to see some progress in the areas of concern raised in our last review. We understand that you were not able to progress on all areas mentioned in earlier reports and would suggest a prioritisation of the issues that you intend to focus on given the constraints the organisation is facing. For example, we would have recommended concentrating efforts on improving your MEL procedures and waiting with the environmental pieces, however, this is a decision that you need to make as an organisation. Finally, we would like to emphasise that we appreciate your ongoing effort to report on behalf of your entire organisation, as we see this as a way of driving organisational development.

Our intention is that this letter, and any response you may wish to provide, is made publicly available on the Charter website, along with your report. You can find the reports that were previously reviewed on the Charter website. However, should there be errors of fact in the feedback above or in the note below, we would of course wish to correct these before publication.

Should you have any comments we would appreciate a response by 12 July 2013.

Yours sincerely,



Janet Hunt Wambui Kimathi Tony Tujan Richard Manning Louise James Brendan Gormley

5th Review Round, May 2013
Note on accountability report
Stichting Panos Network

COMMENTS ON PREVIOUS REPORTS

| 1. Report covering 2009/2010, reviewed In March 2011 | |
|---|--|
| Panel feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information is lacking on e.g. environmental impact and training hours due to the organisational structure. The organisation is encouraged to be more open on where it is and aims to go. - The Panel asks for more information on the broader context in which the organisation operates. - It is stressed that the report would have profited from more examples from the national level; if not possible it should be assessed whether this exercise is useful. |
| Member's comments | None. |
| Member's commitments for the future | None identified in this review round. |
| 2. Report covering 2010/2011, reviewed In April 2012 | |
| Panel feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considerable improvement from the previous report. - Good evidence and stronger signs of institutional commitment. - The organisation is encouraged to improve its anti-corruption policies and report on assets and liabilities in the future. |
| Member's comments | None. |
| Member's commitments for the future | See Gap Analysis Table in the annex. |

COMMENTS ON THIS REPORT

Reporting period: 31 March 2011 – 31 December 2011 (10 months)

Did the Secretariat contact the organisation before forwarding the report to the Panel?

Yes

No

Comment: The Secretariat asked for clarification as in some cases, the number of institutes referred to is sometimes six and sometimes seven. Furthermore, clarification on 2.8 and LA10 was requested. The organisation clarified that the number of institutes was seven during parts of the reporting period and is now six. No further information was provided on 2.8 however the numbers under LA10 were clarified.

| Summary of Profile Disclosures reported on | |
|---|----|
| <i>Recommended (total 28)</i> | 28 |
| <i>Additional</i> | 1 |
| Total | 29 |

| Profile | Comments |
|--|--|
| Strategy and Analysis | |
| 1.1 | <i>Fully addressed</i> However, as in previous report, a strong reference to accountability is lacking. |
| Organisational Profile | |
| 2.1 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 2.2 | <i>Fully addressed</i> The answer under 2.2 in the previous report was considered <i>Good Practice</i> for smaller organisations and the answer in this report is exactly the same. The answer provides a good link between the activities and the mission of the organisation. |
| 2.3 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 2.4 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 2.5 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 2.6 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 2.7 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 2.8 | <i>Partially addressed</i> As in the previous round, the answer lacks information on the number of members/supporters; number of volunteers; or assets/liabilities. |
| 2.9 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 2.10 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| Report Parameters | |
| 3.1 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 3.2 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 3.3 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 3.4 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 3.5 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 3.6 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 3.7 | <i>Fully addressed</i> The organisation acknowledges that improvement is still needed in order to be able to report in line with the standards of the INGO Accountability Charter. |
| 3.8 | <i>n/a</i> This would have been a suitable place to provide more information on the process of how data that feeds into the report is collected from the organisation's various entities. |
| 3.9* | <i>n/a</i> |
| 3.10 | <i>n/a</i> |
| 3.11 | <i>n/a</i> |
| 3.12 | <i>n/a</i> |
| Governance, Commitments, and Engagement | |
| 4.1 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 4.2 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 4.3 | <i>Fully addressed</i> However, the Panel would like to understand better how the organisation defines "independent members" in the Council, since it appears as if these are representatives from the institutes. |
| 4.4 | <i>Partially addressed</i> The answer is exactly the same as provided in the previous report, i.e. information on the policies in place is provided, however information on topics raised via the mechanisms during the reporting period is lacking. The Panel is interested in learning more about the feedback passed through the mechanism |

| | |
|------|---|
| | and how this contributes to organisational development. |
| 4.14 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |
| 4.15 | <i>Fully addressed</i> |

* : Profile Disclosures from the GRI NGO SS, which have been reported on in addition to the ones recommended by the INGO Accountability Charter.

| Summary of Performance Indicators reported on | |
|---|----|
| <i>Recommended (total 18)</i> | 18 |
| <i>Additional</i> | 0 |
| total | 18 |

| Indicators | Comments |
|---|--|
| Program Effectiveness | |
| NGO1 - Stakeholder involvement | <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>The same information is provided in this report as in the previous one, i.e. information on procedures in place; however, information is not provided on how decisions and decision making processes are communicated or how feedback has reshaped policies/procedures. As in the previous report, the organisation indicates that it is currently reviewing its monitoring and evaluation processes.</p> |
| NGO2 - Mechanisms for feedback and complaints | <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>The same information is provided in this report as in the previous one, i.e. information on the policies and procedures in place. However, information on the mechanisms used for assessing complaints or for determining what actions are required in response to complaints is lacking. The mechanism to enable external feedback is rather weak and only applied on the website of the network.</p> |
| NGO3 - Program monitoring, evaluation and learning | <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The same information is provided in this report as in the previous one. The Panel would have welcomed more information about what the organisation learns through these mechanisms and how this learning is disseminated across the organisation.</p> |
| NGO4 - Gender and diversity | <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>The same information is provided in this report as in the previous one, i.e. information on the policies and procedures in place to move towards gender equality. However, information on other types of diversity is lacking. As in the previous report, the organisation states that it aims to develop tools for analysis and project development focusing on disadvantaged groups. The Panel would have been interested in learning more about the concrete outcome that the measures taken have on the work of the organisation, for example how the training provided is reflected in the editorial output of the participants.</p> |

NGO5 - Advocacy positions and public awareness campaigns

Partially addressed

Information on how advocacy positions and campaigns are developed is provided, however information on the process for corrective adjustment; examples of adjustments; where public awareness and advocacy positions are published; and on the process used for exiting a campaign is lacking. The organisation states that it does not have a systematic process for involving stakeholders and partners in developing advocacy positions but rather applies an indirect process of practical experience and feedback. The organisation is strongly encouraged by the Panel to introduce a systematic process in this area, as not having formal structures implies a great risk, for example when institutional knowledge disappears.

NGO6 - Coordination with other actors

Partially addressed

Some information on the processes for identifying potential for duplication or opportunities for partnerships with other organisations is provided; however lacking is information on the processes for promoting learning from others. The Panel looks forward to hearing more about the outcome of these processes in future reports.

Economic

NGO7 - Resource allocation

Not addressed

The information requested on the processes to track the use of resources or the standards that serve as the basis for this tracking system is not provided.

NGO8 - Sources of funding

Fully addressed

EC7 - Local hiring

Partially addressed

The same information is provided in this report as in the previous one, i.e. the percentage of directors/senior staff that are hired locally is given; however, information on the definition used for “senior management” is lacking.

Environmental

EN16 - Greenhouse gas emissions

Not addressed

The same information is provided in this report as in the previous one, i.e. the organisation indicates that it did not measure the quantity of reductions achieved in relation to direct and indirect emissions and does not mention whether it will put a system in place to collect this information in the future.

EN18 - Initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Partially addressed

As in the previous report the answer includes information on some initiatives to reduce emissions, however it does not indicate the reductions achieved. The organisation states that it does not have a collective environment policy or guidelines on greenhouse gas emissions.

Labour

LA1 - Total workforce

Partially addressed

The level of information given is the same as in the previous report, i.e. it includes information on the total workforce divided by employment type, contract type etc. However, it does not indicate the number of employees broken down by employment contract (permanent or temporary contract), or the number of volunteers broken down by employment type (full-time, part-time) or the volunteers’ functions.

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|---|
| <p>LA10 - Workforce training <i>Partially addressed</i> The answer given is on the same level as in the previous report, i.e. it includes information on the average hours of training per employee. The organisation indicates however that it has not collected data broken down by employee category during the reporting period.</p> |
| <p>LA12 - Performance and career development reviews <i>Fully addressed</i> The information given is exactly the same as in the previous report.</p> |
| <p>LA13 - Composition of workforce and governance bodies <i>Partially addressed</i> The information provided is exactly the same as in the previous report, i.e. data on governance bodies are broken down by gender, nationality, age and employees by gender and ethnicity. However information on the age groups of the employees is lacking.</p> |
| <p>Society</p> |
| <p>SO1 - Impact of operations on communities <i>Partially addressed</i> The information provided is exactly the same as in the previous report, i.e. on policies and procedures in place for working to include communities in their work. However, information on whether the organisation's programmes have been effective in mitigating negative/maximising positive impacts; or how feedback has led to further community engagement is lacking. As in the previous report, the organisation indicates that it does not systematically assess the potential impact of its work with any kind of impact assessment procedure.</p> |
| <p>SO3 - Anti-corruption training <i>Partially addressed</i> As in the previous report, the organisation indicates that it did not have anti-corruption policies in place during the reporting period. However, it mentions that some national entities have made progress in incorporating specific anti-corruption policies and procedures into their work. The Panel strongly encourages the organisation to introduce anti-corruption policies as this is an essential element of accountability and looks forward to hearing more about this going forward.</p> |
| <p>Product Responsibility</p> |
| <p>PR6 - Ethical fundraising and marketing communications <i>Partially addressed</i> The information provided is exactly the same as in the previous report, i.e. it includes information on the codes in place. However, it lacks information on the frequency with which the organisation reviews its compliance with these, or the number of complaints received for breaches of its internal code of conduct. The organisation mentions that it has a policy for use of photography.</p> |

* : Performance Indicators from the GRI NGO SS, which have been reported on in addition to the ones recommended by the INGO Accountability Charter.

Panos Network

Gap Analysis Table – Areas of Commitments and Progress achieved

Accountability is a process of continuous improvement. Each year Charter Members in their accountability reports identify and prioritise areas for improvement and corrective actions they plan to take. As of reports submitted in 2014, Members are asked to capture these commitments in this Gap Analysis Table. The Independent Review Panel may suggest the Member to add further issues when reviewing the Member's report. Each year following, the table shall be submitted along with the accountability report and will then be used as a basis to demonstrate progress. The table will be published on the website along with the accountability report and the feedback from the Panel. Please note that the rows where commitments cannot be identified can be deleted from the table.

| GRI - Performance Indicators | Commitment to improvement | Progress achieved Year 1 | Progress achieved Year 2 | Progress achieved Year 3 |
|---|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Program Effectiveness | | | | |
| NGO1: Processes for involvement of affected stakeholder groups. | In report 2010/2011: <i>“Panos is currently reviewing and strengthening its monitoring and evaluation processes and in particular rigorous use of participatory monitoring and evaluation”.</i> | In report 2011: <i>The commitment from the previous report is reiterated.</i> | | |
| NGO4: Measures to integrate gender and diversity into program. | In report 2010/2011: <i>“Panos is currently reviewing project development guidance for addressing power relationships more generally (including gender, but recognising how gender ‘intersects’ with other social differences). We aim to develop tools for needs analysis and project development, which focus</i> | In report 2011: <i>The commitment from the previous report is reiterated.</i> | | |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| | <i>on the active processes of marginalisation and power imbalances that disadvantage particular groups.”</i> | | | |
| Economic | | | | |
| - | | | | |
| Environmental | | | | |
| <i>General (mentioned under 3.7)</i> | In report 2010/2011: <i>“[...] we recognise that more work needs to be done to measure more effectively the outcomes and impact of our work. Some measures of this INGO Accountability Charter reporting framework (for instance, on the Network’s carbon footprint and environmental impact) we have not yet established consolidated mechanisms to record and consolidate. We hope that our engagement with the INGO charter will drive us further to improve our reporting on these aspects of our work.”</i> | In report 2011: <i>The commitment from the previous report is reiterated.</i> | | |
| Labor | | | | |
| - | | | | |
| Society | | | | |
| - | | | | |
| Product Responsibility | | | | |
| - | | | | |