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Dear INGO Accountability Charter Panel,

In your letter of 9 December 2014, providing feedback on Oxfam's first consolidated Accountability Report, you recommended that we move to biennial reporting with a brief interim report providing an updated statement from the CEO on Oxfam's efforts to improve accountability and on progress against the areas that your Panel highlighted in the "Improvement Analysis".

### **Statement from the most senior decision-maker of the organisation**

Strengthening our accountability to all our stakeholders has continued as a major theme within our strategic priorities over the last year. This has manifested itself in a wide variety of ways – from efforts to further improve our “downwards accountability” to affected communities through rolling out our guidance to those managing our projects and partner relationships; to improvements to our “upwards accountability” to our internal governance bodies, through for example the first ever global Oxfam all-staff survey, building a common planning cycle and reporting framework, and seeking formal feedback from the donor community on our Oxfam 2020 organisational change programme in a ‘donor stress-testing’ process.

Most significantly for our accountability efforts, 2014/15 marked a momentous year for the whole Oxfam confederation as we embarked on the fundamental organisational change agenda to reshape the confederation away from being Northern-led to a truly global organisation (a programme we internally call “Oxfam 2020”). The changes that we have committed to will have profound implications for the way that we operate and implementing those changes has been the defining focus of our work over the last year.

The changes mean that we are going to have more Oxfam affiliates in southern countries

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that can raise their own funds, run their own programs, make their own alliances with local people's movements, and lobby their own governments and businesses. These new Oxfams will have access to all the "central" knowledge we've built up over the years about development work, policy analysis, humanitarian delivery and campaigning. Eventually we'll share resources and services such as HR and technology too. This will have two important implications for our accountability:

- a) as we reshape the relationship of all of our governance, management and operational models we are firmly rooting our representation, power and influence in the global South; to ensure that the focus of participation and decision-making lies with those for whom we are primarily accountable: the women and men living in poverty with whom, and for whom, we work..
- b) the changes will result in a much simplified structure at country level, with one Oxfam Country Director, Regional Director and Programme Director replacing the (sometimes large) number of individual Oxfam affiliate Country, Regional & Programme Directors in each country that were a feature of the past. This simplification will improve the way that we engage with and are transparent to all our stakeholders; and ensure that we are better able to monitor and evaluate the extent to which all Oxfam resources are being used effectively.

It's an exciting time for the confederation as we embark on making the changes that this requires, including for example moving the OI Secretariat itself to be located in Nairobi. But directing that effort and enthusiasm towards these more fundamental changes has (as you will see below) inevitably had some implications for the pace of change relating to some of the individual process improvements that you asked us to update you on in your Improvement Analysis of last year. But by transforming ourselves into a more genuinely international organisation, that shares power more democratically and is more accountable to poor communities because we're closer to them, these process improvements will follow.

## **Update on individual improvements identified in the INGO Charter Panel's Improvement Analysis recommendations:**

### **Consolidated Accountability Reporting**

*You asked for feedback on how the Charter framework has supported linking our global decentralized structure more closely; and which information is on the whole federation, the relevant reporting affiliates or Oxfam's headquarter only.*

Our 2013/14 Accountability Report marked an important step forward for the Oxfam confederation in providing a common explanation of the central guidance that we are developing to bring a common approach amongst the independent Oxfam affiliates towards a number of the dimensions of accountability. For seven affiliates (Oxfam International, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam GB, Oxfam Hong Kong, Oxfam Intermón , Oxfam New Zealand and Oxfam Novib), we were also able to get a good overview of a range of relevant statistical information such as staff numbers, evaluations, complaints received etc. as well as case studies of good practice to share across the confederation. We are putting in place a new template for reporting on progress across all activities for 2015/16, which we hope will

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ensure that we have a full picture of all affiliates and Country & Regional office or the next full report due next autumn.

### **Complaints Handling Mechanism (NGO2)**

*You asked for follow up on outcomes of implementation of a common Oxfam policy for handling Complaints and the effectiveness of mechanisms to raise grievances; as well as reasons for the increased number of complaints received in 2013.*

Our cross-affiliate Accountability Working Group, with representatives from the largest affiliates, last year focused on production of an overall Accountability Framework to bring together a range of related policies including a new common Oxfam Open Information Policy, Complaints policy, and Stakeholder Engagement Policy. These were presented to the Executive Board for endorsement. Since then, we have prioritised ensuring that there is underpinning guidance and a template to introduce a common approach to reporting complaints at Country level, which will generate the first common, aggregatable complaints data reporting from March 2016.

### **Gender and Diversity (NGO4 & LA13)**

*You asked for an update on whether Oxfam has taken any steps for improvement in the area of accountability relating to other (non-gender) dimensions of diversity (such as disability, ethnicity, poverty, illiteracy, age, sexual orientation, etc..)*

In 2014 we launched our Even it Up campaign, based around our ground-breaking research into the causes, and consequences, of inequality. This included a range of findings which have forced us to look at who is poor and why, including looking at the needs of particular marginalised groups such as, for example, LGBT communities. We have also seen important examples of mainstreaming issues of disability within our humanitarian responses; as well as in our longer-term development programmes, for example in China where we have a programme advising the Peoples Liberation Army on how to take account of different forms of disability.

### **Anti-Corruption (SO3)**

*You asked for information on progress towards introducing anti-corruption training as a standard practice within Oxfam's induction programmes.*

Anti-corruption policies and training continue to be the responsibility of individual Oxfam affiliates, albeit with common approaches and information sharing actively encouraged. Work is underway to scope out the possibility for creating a shared Internal Audit service. Examples of good practice in 2014/15 include Oxfam Intermon's Ethical Framework, which they deployed to all countries where they are present, and which includes fraud and corruption prevention policies, tools and the protocol for reporting and handling inappropriate behaviors. The deployment in countries was been made via the Country Directors and Country Management Team through regional training sessions.

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**Other examples of good practice in the rolling-out of our accountability guidance across the confederation that we would like to highlight in this report include:**

### **Our Common Approach to MEL and Social Accountability (CAMSA)**

CAMSA establishes a set of minimum requirements for MEL and Social Accountability to be met in each phase of the project and program management cycle. We aim to achieve full compliance across all programs and projects, including campaigns and humanitarian work, by 2019. The roll-out of this approach started last year, with a series of eight regional workshops; between September 2014 and May 2015 189 colleagues in 50 countries across all regions where Oxfam operates, participated in 4-5 days-long roll-out workshops; *they are* now acting as CAMSA ambassadors in their respective country offices, supporting thinking and modeling practice around minimum MEL and social accountability requirements. We are currently in the phase of gradual implementation with country teams a) developing joint improvement plans based on their own assessments of current practice and gaps in relation to CAMSA and b) embedding CAMSA especially in new program design. Improvement plans are expected to feed into annual country planning and reporting.

To support implementation we are building regional practitioners' networks and are continuously working on improving support mechanisms and structures globally (e.g. improved access to tools and feedback mechanisms in our CAMSA online platform as well as integrating cross-cutting issues such as disability inclusion). We are currently finalizing a monitoring strategy for CAMSA implementation which will help us gauge progress along the way and identify challenges to successful institutionalization of CAMSA.

Yours sincerely



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