

## OXFAM INTERNATIONAL BOARD CHARTER

Living Oxfam's values – equality, empowerment, solidarity, inclusiveness, accountability and courage – and being feminist in all we do as Oxfam is both an individual responsibility, and a collective journey.

As members of the Board of Oxfam International (OI), we recognise that governance is leadership; and acknowledge that leadership sets organisational culture, tone and expectations. How we work is as important as what we work on. Through this Charter, we commit – individually and collectively – to take responsibility for our behaviours, actions and interactions with others.

We are guided by the following three principles:

**Accountability:** We will strive to live up to the values and standards of Oxfam. As stewards of Oxfam's vision, mission and strategic objectives, and of the resources in our care, we will be accountable to its key stakeholders – both internal and external – for our actions and decisions. Our Board meetings and interactions will provide a safe environment in which we challenge each other, and those whom we hold accountable.

**Integrity:** We will maintain the highest levels of integrity in our conduct, within and outside of the Boardroom – holding ourselves to these standards and calling out any challenges we see or we encounter in an honest, respectful and timely manner, in dialogue with each other and with others.

**Transparency:** We will be mindful that the information we receive is in our capacity as Board members, being transparent in sharing it with each other (and with others where relevant), and ensuring that information is kept confidential where this is in the best interest of the organisation.

**To this end, we commit, both individually and collectively as members of the OI Board, to:**

**Always act in the best interests of Oxfam International by:**

- ✓ Acting as a champion for Oxfam's vision, mission and strategic objectives.
- ✓ Enacting our governance and leadership role in a way that enables all parts of the Confederation to achieve impact as One Oxfam.
- ✓ Avoiding any conflict of interest or duty, declaring any potential (real or perceived) conflict as soon as we become aware of it and agreeing to be bound by the Board's judgment in such situations.
- ✓ Strengthening trust and confidence in Oxfam among its own staff and by the people, communities and partners (including donors and regulators) that it works with.

**Enable the Board to effectively exercise its mandate by:**

- ✓ Fulfilling the responsibilities assigned to us as Board members to the best of our ability and in a timely manner.
- ✓ Committing the time that is required for preparation and follow up of any Board meetings to ensure our discussions are focused and effective.
- ✓ Acknowledging that our experiences and perspectives will at times diverge and engaging with such differences constructively and in a respectful manner to help us achieve collective outcomes that are in the best interest of the global organisation.
- ✓ Accepting any final Board decisions, even where arrived at not through consensus but through a majority vote, communicating on Board decisions and deliberations with one voice and upholding current organizational positions and policies when communicating as a Board member, even if/ when not in agreement with them.
- ✓ Maintaining confidentiality about information received and issues discussed by the Board, unless explicitly agreed otherwise.

- ✓ Contributing to regular reflection on our performance as Board members, and as a Board, to enable joint learning and improvement.

**Ensure a clear separation between governance and management by**

- ✓ Respecting the role of the OI Executive Director and their leadership of the OI Secretariat.
- ✓ Respecting communication lines and channels with staff as agreed with the OI Executive Director and Executive Leadership Team and being clear on where such communication is in a governance capacity with Board authority.

**Communicate effectively with each other and with others in Oxfam by**

- ✓ Being kind and generous in our communications with each other and with others, always assuming good intent and first seeking to understand, before being understood.
- ✓ Recognising that not all of us or everyone in Oxfam is equally comfortable in English and that in a globally distributed, multi-cultural/ethnic and multi-lingual organisation, communication needs to consider different levels of access, tools and preferences.
- ✓ Communicating efficiently and effectively and responding promptly to emails, other correspondence and requests for specific action.
- ✓ Not speaking as a Board member of OI to the media or in a public forum unless specifically requested by the OI Executive Director and with the prior knowledge of the relevant Country Director as well as approval from the OI Chair.
- ✓ Ensuring that any content that we share, including via any public platforms (print, text or social), is not harmful to OI's reputation and using, where necessary or appropriate, a disclaimer stating that the opinions expressed are personal and not those of OI.
- ✓ Not using social media to advocate on behalf of or support any political candidate or party, religious group or economic interest group without including such a disclaimer.

**Contribute to Oxfam delivering its commitments on what it stands for by:**

- ✓ Overseeing compliance – by Oxfam International and across the confederation – with relevant government laws and regulations, and of any other agreements that the global organisation has entered into.
- ✓ Taking an active interest in OI's public image, remembering at all times, even outside of an OI context, that others may view us primarily as OI Board members and therefore as a representative of Oxfam and its values.
- ✓ Supporting the achievement of Oxfam's organisational and strategic goals through participation in specific Oxfam activities, or through our own work and engagement – informing the OI Secretariat or relevant country director where our individual activity might be perceived as associated with Oxfam International or our role as OI Board members.
- ✓ Upholding and exemplifying Oxfam's commitment to impartiality and independence.
- ✓ Demonstrating Oxfam's commitment to the universality of human rights and supporting its activism for a world of equality and that provides safe and vibrant spaces in which all people can hold the powerful to account.

Signed on .....

By.....

Print name: