

Catalysing People: ActionAid's Strategy 2012-2017

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1. OUR INVITATION

This strategy aims to build on the strengths of our past, from our rooted local and national work and our international engagement, balancing consolidation and innovation. It offers continuity with our previous strategy *Rights to End Poverty*, recommitting us to the human rights based approach, maintaining a strong focus on women's rights and following through the process of internationalisation. But it also seeks to have a tighter focus, enabling us to evolve into a truly united, coherent organisation that builds on our foundation of internationalism, transcending North-South dichotomies.

We will achieve greater focus through deepening our growth in existing Members and slowing down the pace of geographic expansion. This strategy is focused on just four concrete, SMART, strategic mission objectives – a significant shift from our previous strategy which had four strategic goals and six broad themes, each of which had their own multiple objectives.

In this new strategy period we will promote greater synergies in our ways of working; avoiding duplications, reducing the proliferation of methodologies, achieving highly accountable levels of delivery of our organizational objectives, integrating our policy, campaigning and programmatic gains, converging our planning and review systems nationally and internationally, and stopping service delivery as an end in itself.

Once approved (in Tanzania at the ActionAid Assembly meeting in July 2011), this strategy will be the binding glue uniting the whole ActionAid federation. All countries will review or develop their Country Strategy Papers within a 6 month period to align them with this strategy.

2. OUR VISION and MISSION

As expressed in our constitution:

Our VISION is *“a world without poverty and injustice in which every person enjoys their right to a life of dignity”*

Our MISSION is *“to work with poor and excluded people to eradicate poverty and injustice”*

3. OUR CALL FOR ACTION

3.1 THE WORLD IN THE COMING DECADE

“The world faces a crisis of civilisation, a systemic crisis, a complex and inter-connected crisis of the economy, of the local and global architecture of power, of values and of the environment”

Candido Grzybowski

Around the world the current model of development is increasingly being exposed as both unjust and unsustainable. The increasing privatisation and commoditisation of limited natural resources is undermining peoples' livelihoods, impacting most acutely the lives of women. In the coming years, conflict and struggles for land, water and forests are inevitable. One certainty in the world seems to be the increasing number of shocks and crises, whether related to food, fuel, finances, climate or conflict - all of which increase human vulnerability and insecurity. Women suffer most from these multiple crises and they face many new challenges from the rise of fundamentalisms which threaten to further curtail their choices, sexual rights, reproductive rights, mobility and labour rights.

Despite a huge diversity of strong and weak States, progressive and reactionary governments, there are common trends towards a retreating State, driven by neo-liberal thinking that leads to the privatisation of public services and the loss of public goods. The retreat of the State exacerbates the burden of unpaid care work. In many countries, corporations and invisible power structures are increasing their hold on power, undermining States, driving a "race to the bottom". In too many countries, there is an active shrinking of democratic space for effective citizen engagement, through terrorism laws, legislation against civil society, a backlash on women's rights, constraints on access to information and the curtailing of the freedom of the press. Not enough is done to advance progress on fundamental social and economic rights, for example leaving over 70 million girls and boys without any access to school.

Over a billion people today live in absolute poverty, the majority of them in middle income countries where the unjust distribution of resources is an acute violation of human rights. Within a few years, in many parts of Africa, half the population will be under 20 years old. This could be a catalyst for rapid economic take off, if investments are made now in education and job creation, but it could equally lead to millions of disaffected youth, contributing to instability and the potential failure of States. Increasingly those struggling with poverty and injustice are concentrated in urban areas, living in often unsafe illegalised slums without basic services, facing unemployment or under-employment and being confronted with the constant threat of forced eviction. In many countries, the aid business, working in the name of poverty, continues to be part of the problem, undermining democracy, fragmenting efforts and contributing to privatisation processes.

However, this rapidly changing world also creates opportunities. Power is shifting from the US and former colonial powers towards "re-emerging economies" and a multi-polar world, providing opportunities for challenging the dominant development model. There are some progressive governments in all parts of the world that are accelerating democracy, seriously committed to a more sustainable planet and to ending poverty. There has been a flourishing of peoples' movements, coalitions and platforms across the world. Women are gaining political and economic power. There are hundreds of millions of new potential supporters, particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, willing to commit some part of their income and time to help catalyse change. There have been rapid advances in technologies which present new possibilities - for mobilisation, communication and collective action - if these are harnessed effectively for the benefit of those struggling against poverty and injustice. The challenge is to build convergence between these different actors around alternatives which can offer a sustainable and equitable future for all. This is indeed an historical moment, full of possibilities.

We believe that the indignity of poverty faced by over a billion people is a violation of fundamental human rights. It arises from unequal power relations, patriarchy and from an unjust global order, where the isolation and fragmentation of people reinforces injustice. Institutions such as the State, the market, the local community and the family often perpetuate inequality and injustice – through authoritarianism, exploitation, racism, other forms of discrimination, fundamentalisms and harmful traditional practices - but they can be transformed. Women's rights are fundamental, as gender is the most universal predictor of poverty and human rights violations. Changes need to be made to both the structural causes of poverty as well as the attitudes and behaviours of people if change is to come – and this requires purposeful individual and collective action at local, national and international levels. Together, as ActionAid, we believe that another world is imperative.

3.2 HOW WE SEE CHANGE HAPPEN: OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

When people struggling with poverty and injustice are empowered and connected, and they work collectively with organisations and movements campaigning together across the globe for structural and behavioural change, inspired by rights-based alternatives, they will be able to achieve and enjoy their rights and overcome injustices. Building from the strengths of our direct engagement with people in poor communities, our role is to catalyse people and peoples' movements to confront the causes of extreme poverty and injustice.

3.3 OUR POSITIONING / IDENTITY

We are uniquely rooted, engaging directly over the long term with people who are struggling with poverty and injustice across almost 40 countries, as well as mobilising and campaigning to challenge the structural causes of poverty and injustice.

We are committed to advancing internationalism, transcending the North-South dichotomy- creating a new type of international organisation and a new way of working. We are a secular organisation, independent of political parties but deeply political in our engagement with processes of transformation.

We aspire to demonstrate a different model for the aid, development and humanitarian sectors, prioritising women's rights and challenging self-interested, top down, neo-colonial, gender-blind, funder-driven and paternalistic approaches that all too often reinforce inequalities.

We link people and we support - with resources, solidarity, capacity-development and action - a range of partners, peoples' movements and other actors who share our convictions that a different development model is imperative.

3.4 OUR FIVE ESSENTIAL VALUES

All our (2,700) staff, our many volunteers, and our work in the world, are driven by five essential values:

- *The Passion for Equality and Justice*
- *The Courage of Conviction,*
- *The Embrace of Human and Nature's Diversity,*
- *The Duty of Mutual Accountability*
- *The Commitment to Impact.*

4. OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 5 YEARS

4.1 OUR UNITING GOAL

Catalysing people and peoples' movements to confront the causes of extreme poverty and injustice.

4.2 OUR FOUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR 2012-2017

1. **20 million women will be able to defend and claim their rights and control over their bodies, time, labour and environment through their increased awareness, their strengthened movements and leadership, and actions to reform policies, laws and societal behaviours.**

*Around the world social norms, stereotypes and structures still define women's primary role as reproductive or as objects of men. In turn, female bodies become sites of control, and are subsequently valued only in terms of their sexuality, reproductive abilities or symbols of culture (e.g. dress-codes). Fundamentalisms compound the problem. Our work will ensure **women have control over their bodies** so that they will be able to exercise their rights to live free of violence in their home and their communities, control their sexuality and sex lives, choose the number and spacing of children and the methods used to control reproduction, and stand up against harmful traditional practices. Most women have no **control over their time** because of their heavy invisible burden of household responsibilities and childcare; as a result many have to forego their health, rights to an education, decent work and leisure time. Women living in poverty accept low wages, poor working conditions and flexible contracts to balance their responsibilities at home and their work in the market. Our work will focus on supporting women to call for government measures to recognise, value and reduce their burden of unpaid care work, build collective societal responsibility for care work, and gain labour rights and social protections for informal women workers.*

- 2. 600 million people will have sustainable livelihoods and food sovereignty through having secured democratic and equitable public control and ecologically sustainable management over water bodies, forests and land.**

*When women and men have **sustainable livelihoods and food sovereignty** they are able to make a living for themselves, control and define their own food source without compromising their rights, while maintaining dignity. Around the world natural resources are rapidly becoming privatised and commoditised. As a result, the poorest and the most marginalised communities are experiencing expulsion, exclusion and deprivation. Our response is to catalyse people's struggles to regain and secure **public control** over forest, water, commons and especially women's rights to land (that has always been tenuous). The dominant economic model is based on limitless exploitation of nature and people. By promoting **ecological sustainable management** of natural resources in our model of development we will advance coexistence of all living things for future generations.*

- 3. 500 million people in 30 countries will have advanced participatory democracy and secured progressive resource redistribution, quality public education and social protection.**

*Through **participatory democracy** and opening of democratic space people can influence decision making and make the state accountable to all. By working with people struggling with poverty and injustice, enhancing their voice and representation, and building coalitions to confront corrupt elites, patronage and invisible power, we will collectively demand universal social protections. These **social protections** diminish people's exposure to risks, unemployment, exclusion, sickness, disability and old age. **Redistributing resources** nationally and internationally will be central to build and finance alternative climate-sensitive development models founded on social, economic and ecological justice. We will work on this by advancing and campaigning for progressive tax reforms and macro-economic policies locally, nationally and internationally, and by promoting effective regulatory frameworks, including over corporations and markets. Recognising children's right to education, we will have a special focus on securing **quality public education** because schools are rooted in communities and can become a key space for catalysing active critically engaged young citizens, building local rights awareness and truly applying participatory democracy.*

- 4. Led by 20,000 trained women, people in 10,000 communities vulnerable to disasters and conflict will be better prepared and resilient, and will have established capabilities to work with governments and other actors to protect and ensure their rights during and after major disasters.**

*Climate change, resource limits and increasing conflict will mean that people in poverty will experience more and more intense shocks affecting their lives. People's ability to be to be **resilient** will be essential for them to adapt to climate change, manage their natural resources sustainably, know their rights, and recover quicker after disasters or conflict. Working with people in affected communities we will ensure they have active programmes to*

*identify and reduce risks, including risks of increased violence against women. We will explicitly focus on building **women's leadership**, as women are frequently excluded when agencies and governments step in, yet they have a specific set of community coping and recovery strategies that should be the foundation for effective responses. Our goal will be to hold governments and other agencies to account on emergency response and long-term recovery programmes, based firmly on human rights frameworks.*

Please note: we will be “ambition-checking” the numbers in these four strategic objectives over the coming weeks.

4.3 OUR COMMON APPROACH TO THESE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Building on our Human Rights Based Approach Resource Book, we commit ourselves to a common approach to empowering people, campaigning and building solidarity around these four strategic objectives in order to change structures, policies, practices, attitudes and behaviours. In all countries, at all levels and on all four objectives we commit to:

- **Taking sides** with people struggling with poverty and injustice, promoting participatory power analysis at all levels and strengthening their leadership, in order to ignite and bolster peoples' action and peoples' movements.
- Linking our grassroots programmes, advocacy, campaigning and communications work with national and international engagement, conceiving and delivering these within one **coherent strategy**.
- Recognising the integral role of mobilising citizens in all countries and **directly linking people across countries in order to build solidarity** and support for change processes.
- Ensuring that we explore continually **the intersections between the four strategic objectives** so that our interventions are always looking at the synergies and connections between these priorities, working together to construct and propose alternatives to present models.
- **Prioritising women's rights**, catalyzing women's movements and women's leadership at all levels.
- Building more **just and democratic** States, societies and institutions at all levels, and confronting invisible and undemocratic powers.
- Ensuring that we can **prove the impact** of all our work on the lives of people struggling against poverty and injustice in the communities where we are rooted.

4.4 OUR CORE WORK WITH COMMUNITIES, INCLUDING WITH CHILDREN

- We will ensure **grassroots engagement** is the font of understanding and evidence for all of us – our base for real engagement with people struggling with poverty and injustice – and the true test of the value of all our work – do we make a difference in peoples' lives?
- We will improve the quality of our strategic **work with children**, as they are part of the communities where we work and the violation of rights impacts on them dramatically, limiting the potential for future transformation. Our principal point of engagement with

children will be through education, promoting rights in schools that can build the critical awareness of children, encourage their active engagement in transforming schools and support the emergence of a new generation of active citizens.

- We will proudly harness the immense potentials of our **child sponsorship** mechanism to contribute to achieving our mission.
- We will take systematic **baseline data** on the rights and conditions of people struggling with poverty and injustice, ensuring that we are also able to track the changes *all* our work makes in children's lives.
- We will define locally, in communities where we work, those groups who are **most excluded**, prioritising our awareness raising and organising work with women from these groups, for example with indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, dalits, sexual minorities, migrants and slum dwellers.
- We will ensure that the human rights based approach (as outlined in our HRBA Resource Book) defines *all* our work, focusing on empowering, organising and campaigning, and that any **service delivery** work is seen as practical solidarity that builds on this and is done in partnership with government (wherever possible). Basic services are the responsibility of government and our work within a strong rights-based framework is to strengthen the recognition of all people and institutions involved that basic needs are basic rights – ensuring that people are able to leverage and claim rights from the State more effectively and sustainably in future.
- We will ensure that there are no isolated / self contained **grassroots programmes** but rather that local engagement is linked upwards to national level (and sometimes beyond) through gathering strong evidence, promoting policy analysis, using mass communications and digital media, harnessing peoples' voices, organising people and communities and linking them to wider movements.
- We recognise that working in **urban areas** is a new priority and so we will have some engagement, in line with our 4 strategic objectives, in urban areas in every country. Our approaches in urban contexts need to be further developed and refined based on our collective learning and the experience of others.

4.5 OUR PRIORITY ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The underlying causes of poverty and injustice are gendered. The fact that women living in poverty because of their socially ascribed roles have less access to land, education, networks, technology, transport, cash, decision-making or control over their bodies and safety keep them poorer. Violations of women's human rights are the most pervasive to the extent they are perceived as normal. Strategies to explicitly confront these different causes of poverty and injustice are therefore essential for us to have real impact on the lives of women, and indeed their communities. This is understood globally and in all major international agreements, but the rhetoric abounds. Instead, **we truly commit to "walk the talk" ensuring our work in every area, on every issue and in every campaign prioritises women's rights.** We are also committed to stand-alone initiatives and programmes. We will also continue to build women's leadership internally and will work to transform ActionAid's organisational culture and practices to respect and protect women's rights.

4.6 OUR WORK WITH ACTIVIST YOUTH

Building on our analysis of the importance of youth in the coming period and their potential role both as spoilers and drivers of change, we need to engage youth in constructively shaping a more democratic, equitable and sustainable world. **Youth will be recognised as a key constituency** in all our work, as leaders in their own right who are facing a range of human rights violations never experienced by generations before them. We will strengthen the Activista network, building leadership (through training of 20,000 youth leaders) and mobilising a total of 5 million young people. This Activista network will prioritise its campaigning and activism in line with the objectives in this strategy. We will catalyse existing and new youth organisations locally and nationally to link with this network. We will encourage youth groups from our grassroots work to participate in this dynamic network as agents of change and we will also encourage older children who have become critically aware of rights through our education work to join Activista.

4.7 OUR ENGAGEMENT WITH SUPPORTERS

We recognise that all people that participate in ActionAid's mission – through volunteering, child sponsorship, donations, campaigning, fundraising efforts or Activista work – are our supporters, who all contribute to achieving our mission and strategic objectives. **We will grow our supporter base to 10 million**, which will present the organisation with a massive potential to influence and mobilise across the world for progressive social change, including through taking ActionAid's mission and vision to other social and political spaces we cannot immediately reach. Our supporters can act as campaigners, voters and consumers to make change happen. We aim to grow and deepen our relationship with supporters, supporting their ambitions for justice and linking them with people in communities, other supporters and active citizens across the globe. We aim to take them on a journey to deepen their understanding of our mission and approach and we value their contributions, knowledge, creativity and networks. We aim to strengthen our accountability to them, reporting on the results of our work.

5 OUR ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES.

To deliver on this strategy we will need to significantly enhance the way in which our organisation works so that we work together more coherently and effectively to deliver on our ambitious strategic objectives. This will require a renewed commitment to programme quality; diversifying and expanding our resources, strengthening our ability to deliver on our mission, transforming our organisational culture and expanding strategically into new countries.

5.1 RECOMMITTING TO PROGRAMME QUALITY AND IMPACT

Following our commitment to impact, our ambition to be accountable, our priority attached to women's rights, our need to overcome past silos and our intention to learn across programmes and countries, we will re-prioritize programme quality. This will require substantial investment in systems and staff capacity.

- We will enrich our current **Human Rights Based Approach Resource Book**, harmonizing it with this strategy, so that it serves as a focal point for guiding our work at all levels and improving programme design and implementation.
- We will support the convergence of our **participatory methodologies** to consolidate more inter-sectional approaches to HRBA at local level, using power and policy analysis, with clear baselines linked to the rights and conditions of people.
- We will implement **common programme planning, monitoring and evaluation systems** that follow from our theory of change and our 4 strategic objectives, emphasizing coherent planning between programme, policy, campaigning, communications and funding work at all levels.
- We will review and simplify our multiple policies and systems, aligning them to an overarching **accountability framework**. This will build on our learning from ALPS over the last ten years, integrating new developments in our governance and management systems and in our programming framework.
- We will strengthen our **partnerships** at local, national and international levels by ensuring that our mutual roles and responsibilities are clear, that the capacity building needs of both ourselves and partners are addressed, and that we are critically aware of our own power in all our relationships.
- We will develop **systems and structures** that enable us to learn from our collective experiences and from the experience of others, in order to improve our strategies, methodologies and tools.
- We will prepare our programs, structures and systems to anticipate and prepare for ever-more frequent **shocks**, and we will use shocks as opportunities for transformative change, including being ready to propose alternative models.
- We will invest in our **advocacy and campaigning** capacity to deliver strategic multi-country campaigns in relation to our 4 strategic objectives. We will improve the linkages of this work with our community based programmes and mobilisation, using evidence from our local and national work and (wherever possible) tracking the impact of campaigns on communities where we work. Our campaigns may include working in unconventional alliances where this will accelerate change. They will be focused to ensure that they confront the structural causes of poverty and injustice.
- We will invest in **mass communications and digital media**, recognising they are fundamental to securing changes in policies, practices, attitudes and behaviours. We need a fundamental shift in culture, structure, staff skills and resourcing to become a digital organisation that meets the needs of our evolving, current and potential audiences.

- We will constantly work on developing and advocating for more people-centred and ecologically-sustainable **alternatives** to existing models, policies and approaches.

5.2 STRENGTHENING OUR GLOBAL FEDERATION'S ABILITY TO DELIVER ON THE MISSION

- We are committed to reflecting diversity, power-awareness and our own values in the way that we are organised. **Internationalisation is a political, not a technical, project** and collectively we need to ensure that it does not become bureaucratised but ensures our ability to have a positive impact on peoples' lives.
- Our federal model is built on the foundation of **inter-dependence** and a conscious balance between self-rule and shared rule. Such a balance will be built on the recognition that Members are **dual citizens (international and national)** that are bound together by a shared vision, mission, values, identity and brand, theory of change, strategic priorities, approach and of course constitution. Within these shared elements, we are committed to promoting greater self-reliance of Members, contextualised national strategies and decentralisation of power.
- By the end of this strategy period we aim to **transform 24 country programmes and associates into full affiliates** through a carefully phased, streamlined and supported process, based on learning from the past 5 years. We will explore how countries that cannot become affiliates due to political or legal constraints, will have their voice represented in the assembly, for example by an affiliate of their choice.
- AAI will work towards **delegating to Members the delivery of some priority areas of international work**. This is both to reduce costs at international level, ensure efficiencies and most importantly to create a web of inter-connecting ownership of our common strategy among Members.
- To ensure the value-addition of the International Secretariat and its ability to serve the Membership effectively in line with our constitution and this strategy, the International Secretariat will:
 - Promote **alignment** with this strategy, managing its coherent delivery across the Membership, reforming structures and systems, and investing resources to ensure harmonisation and effectiveness.
 - Provide strategic **support and capacity building** around the goal and 4 objectives, ensuring programmes at all levels are harmonized around these, generating and using knowledge appropriately, promoting innovation, coordinating relevant multi-country programmes, campaigns and policy positioning, playing a quality assurance role and investing to ensure programme quality and impact.
 - Advance the innovative **fundraising** strategy outlined here, with Members.
 - Transform our **financial management** to ensure accountability – raising the recognition of finance as essential to the mission, investing in effective financial systems and skills; requiring leaders at all level to take full responsibility for good financial management – and training and equipping them to do so.

- Support a streamlined **internationalisation** process and strengthen the collaborative spirit in the federation, whilst continuing to line-manage country programmes
- **Represent** ActionAid in external regional and international policy spaces, within international alliances, and with the media, and lead the formation of international tactical and strategic coalitions where necessary to advance this strategy.

5.3 DIVERSIFYING AND EXPANDING OUR RESOURCE BASE AND ENSURING EFFECTIVE DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES BEHIND OUR STRATEGY

Within this strategy period we will:

- **Double** our total global annual income to 450 million Euros by 2017;
- Have a majority of our income coming from individuals across the federation;
- Have **one million** regular donors;
- Double our official income from our existing markets to 140 million euros;
- Triple our income from high value individual, trusts and progressive companies
- Launch an exciting 5-year global appeal in 2014, to further one of our strategic objectives, increase our income, attract new supporters and strengthen our profile.

Our funding strategy in the coming years will be built upon clear national and international funding plans, and will seek to grow our funding in innovative and sustainable ways for the flexibility required to achieve our mission. We will do this by:

- **Diversifying our funding** in order to reduce our dependency on a few Members and strengthen our collective funding capacity by:
 - increasing long term investments in emerging Member markets and sustain fundraising capacity development amongst the wider Membership;
 - increasing the proportion of official and high value funds raised, based on stringent criteria to ensure support of mission priorities.
- **Consolidating our income growth from individuals**, where child sponsorship remains the main entry point for new supporters (in most Members). Child sponsor regular givers will continue to be upgraded to regular giving products with higher amounts and less restriction. Child Sponsorship will be integrated more closely to our core approach/mission.
- **Releasing more unrestricted funding** by changing the Child Sponsorship product, to give greater flexibility at the country and international level and ensure coherent planning to reach our objectives.
- **Using our reserves** more effectively to fund investment in future growth.
- **Innovating and developing new income sources** in particular through the development of new regular giving products and exploring the potential of other innovations for example, coffee shops, merchandise etc.
- **Building a strong model of resource mobilisation** where every Member does their part for the whole federation.

Please note there is ongoing work underway to test the viability of these resourcing propositions, which will inform the next draft.

How we will allocate our resources:

In order to achieve the exciting objectives in this strategy we will work to build self-reliant national affiliates and an International Secretariat that is able to serve its Membership. While our local work is key to our success, we will need to make critical investments in fundraising, communications, technology, M&E systems, staff capacity, programming-campaigning-policy capacity in all countries and within the International Secretariat - with some urgency. We will mobilise these additional financial resources by:

- Cutting costs and looking for efficiencies at all levels to minimize duplication of work, by introducing cross-cutting saving initiatives, and/or centralising some procurement of services (e.g. printing) at local national and international levels;
- Implementing a streamlined budget and planning process that will tackle multiple funding allocation inefficiencies;
Ensuring programme expenses are funded with restricted funding resources (where some now unnecessarily tap unrestricted sources), through improved funding planning;
- Seeking to create a revolving fundraising investment fund for Members, using a small portion of the unrestricted reserves.

5.4 TRANSFORMING OUR ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Our organisational culture should reflect our 5 core values embedded in our behaviour and ways of working and they should guide our relationships within the federation, with partners, allies and supporters. All our staff and volunteers should promote and live our values in the day to day operations of the organisation and in how we live.

The Passion for Equality and Justice

We will embody and ensure equal opportunities for everyone, irrespective of race, sex, sexual orientation, age, HIV status, colour, class, ethnicity, disability, location or religion.

The inequalities and injustices in societies where we work do not automatically stop when we enter an ActionAid office and we should work actively to challenge them internally as well as in the outside world. We need to challenge sexism, , racism, homophobia, stigmatisation and the abuse of power. We need to mentor, coach and support staff, particularly at the front-line. We will continue our investments in promoting women's leadership development, supporting the emergence of participatory, democratic approaches to leadership, based on feminist principles, with transparent decision-making processes. .

The Courage of Conviction

We will be creative, bold, and innovative, willing to take risks, without fear of failure and continuously committed with the poor, in pursuit of making the greatest possible impact on the causes of poverty.

We will pursue our objectives with passion and conviction, encouraging the taking of risks, whilst ensuring we have strong risk analysis and management systems in place. We will put strong safety and security policies in place so that both our own staff and partners who are working to defend human rights are given support and protection as needed.

The Embrace of Human and Nature's Diversity,

We recognize and protect the rights and the mutual interdependency of human beings and all of nature.

We recognise that our greatest assets are our diverse staff, partners, supporters and the women, men, girls and boys we work with - and we need to celebrate and respect this diversity. We will work to achieve a better work-life balance for our diverse staff, adapting policies to different contexts and needs. We need to move towards being a more multi-lingual organisation, whilst avoiding bureaucratisation and unnecessary costs. Equally we need to be a greener organisation, aware of our carbon footprint and working to reduce this everywhere, including through investment in communication technologies so that we are not flying unnecessarily for internal meetings.

The Duty of Mutual Accountability

We will ensure that we uphold our responsibilities amongst ourselves, and with communities, our partners and our supporters.

We commit to working together cooperatively towards our common objectives, breaking the silos that have been created in the past, where our structures have sometimes confused accountabilities and obstructed collective engagement in common projects. We will maximize the synergies between all our different areas and functions and our federation, promoting mutual accountability in all our relationships. We all have dual citizenship within ActionAid, both national and international – being rooted in one country but inter-dependent with those rooted in others. We will model accountable, decisive leadership at all levels. We will improve our contract management and capacity development systems so that those who secure funding from external donors are clear about their accountabilities and able to deliver on them. We will also strengthen our performance management systems so that all staff are held accountable for delivering effectively their own work and for working cooperatively with others.

The Commitment to Impact

We will drive and organize our work seeking to achieve effective changes in the causes that produce and reproduce poverty and injustice.

We will strengthen systems and processes to ensure that we can prove the impact of our work on the lives of people living with poverty and injustice – and we will build staff and partners' capacity at all levels to achieve this. We commit to capturing our learning more effectively, as well as drawing learning from the external world, processing this into knowledge that can be widely shared and used.

5.5 EXPANDING INTO NEW COUNTRIES TO ACHIEVE AND SUSTAIN OUR ON-GOING IMPACT AND FUTURE INFLUENCE

In order not to undermine our commitment to impact on the lives of people struggling with poverty and injustice, as well as to learn from past experiences, we want to balance ambition with consolidation. We understand that growth will be necessary to adjust to a fast-changing external environment and to ensure we have the resources, skills, and political influence to achieve our mission. We will explore expansion into Central America given the region's extreme poverty, strong social movement base, increasing loss of international partnerships, and our limited presence in the

Americas. We will explore expansion into West Asia (Middle East) given its geo-political influence, critical need for south-south/west-east solidarity, shrinking democratic space, and profound experiences of poverty and injustice. We will explore expansion into Indonesia, given their strategic influence in the region, the growing grip of fundamentalisms, and its potential role as a re-emerging economy worldwide.

In each of the above ActionAid Members already have some experience and strong relationships. We will also be open to mergers with like-minded organisations who will bring strong assets for us to deliver our mission. We will not start-up from scratch in any new country. All expansion will be carefully considered so as to not draw down on our unrestricted income and our limited senior management time.

6 CONCLUSION

Our new strategy is built on the foundations of decades of our diverse experiences – with communities, peoples’ movements, social organisations and many others – together with our own reflections. Distilling these has now enabled us to achieve high levels of focus in identifying the most critical dimensions which need our collective action.

More than ever, we need to protect, nurture and strengthen our shared focus, synergise our ways of working together, and propel the strength of our federal diversity into ambitious gains for people struggling with poverty and injustice.

Our international strategy is our springboard for bold action. In pursuit of another world, which we commit to participate in building, it is imperative that our shared strategy is accountably implemented and that our action speaks for itself, for the great tasks that await us all.

Filled with hope, we commit to transform the challenges faced in the world into opportunities for people facing poverty and injustice on a daily basis. We believe the success of our efforts in catalysing peoples’ action and peoples’ movements to confront the causes of extreme poverty and injustice, will lay the foundations for another, better world for all.

THE PROCESS FOR FEEDBACK

We invite you to review this first draft of ActionAid's new International Strategy for 2012-2017. The core directions of this strategy were derived from an inspiring multi-locational conference of 120 people in Johannesburg from 17th-21st January 2011, including ActionAid's Assembly and Board members, International and Country Directors, Theme and Function Heads from over 40 countries.

*We invite your feedback on this first draft by **1st March 2011** at the latest. We encourage wide dissemination of this across staff and partners and we hope that national Boards and national staff can agree a single consolidated response from each country, on no more than 3 sides of A4 paper. Themes and functions should also consult internationally and each should also provide a single response on no more than 3 sides. You may post your response on the following specially designed website www.actionaidfuturestrategy.wikispaces.com where you will also be able to review other responses. If you need help in doing this please contact Catherine Rodgers: Catherine.rodgers@actionaid.org.*

If individuals have critical suggestions that are not captured in these feedback processes they may be sent in no more than 300 words to david.archer@actionaid.org.