

PART FOUR • Annexes

Annex I *Examples of Ombudsman Schemes*

I. The World Bank Inspection Panel

ROLE	An independent forum for private citizens who believe that they or their interests have been or could be adversely affected by a project financed by the World Bank with the responsibility to carry out investigations.
COMPLAINANTS	At minimum Requesters must show in writing that they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • live in or represent people in the project area; • are or are likely to be affected adversely by project activities
COMPLAINTS COVERED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situations where individuals or groups believe that World Bank programme has or could directly harm their interests; • failure by the Bank to follow its policies and procedures; • discussed their concerns with Bank Management and are not satisfied with the reaction
COMPLAINTS NOT COVERED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints with respect to actions which are the responsibility of other parties, such as the borrower; • complaints against procurement decisions by Bank borrowers from suppliers of goods and services financed under the bank under a loan/credit agreement; • requests filed after the closing date of the loan/credit financing project
PROCEDURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The panel decides whether the Request is acceptable • The Panel sends the Request to Bank Management who prepare a response to the allegations and submit it to the Panel • The Panel makes a preliminary review of the Request, conducts an independent assessment of the merits of the Bank Management response to it, and recommends to the Bank Board whether or not the Request should be investigated. • If the Board approves a Panel recommendation to investigate, the Panel then proceeds the investigation. • When the Panel finishes an investigation, it sends its findings the Board as well as to Bank Management. • The Bank Management then has six weeks to submit its recommendations to the Board on what actions the Bank should take in response to the Panel findings. • Based on the Panel's findings and the Bank Management's recommendations, the Board then takes the final decision on what should be done.
REMEDIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board acts upon Panel's recommendations, e.g. withdraw funding project • Panel will seek to enhance public awareness of the results of investigations through all available sources
STRUCTURE OF SCHEME	Independent body comprising of three inspectors, appointed by the Executive Directors

2. The Health Service Ombudsman

ROLE	Independent body that investigates complaints about NHS.
COMPLAINANTS	Patients; relative; NHS employee; individuals; groups of individuals; partnerships; charities, etc. who consider they've suffered hardship or injustice.
COMPLAINTS COVERED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor service; failure to provide service you are entitled to receive; • maladministration (e.g. delay, not following proper procedures, rudeness, not explaining decisions, not answering complaint fully); • complaints about the treatment provided by a doctor or nurse or other NHS professionals; complaints about access to information.
COMPLAINTS NOT COVERED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complaints which can be taken to court or tribunal; • personnel issues (e.g. appointments, pay or discipline); commercial or contractual matters, unless they relate to services for patients provided under NHS contract; services in non-NHS hospital.
PROCEDURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complain through complaints procedure of hospital or clinic; • if unresolved complain to local NHS Trust for review; • write to ombudsman, describe what happened, when, where, who, etc; provide all evidence – letters, background papers, etc; • complaints are screened to establish whether they fall within jurisdiction; • ombudsman investigates through interviews, fact finding, etc, report produced.
REMEDIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apologies; • getting a decision changed; repayment of unnecessary costs; • may call for changes to be made so that what has gone wrong does not happen again; • investigation cases published - all non-binding recommendations but it very rare that parties reject ombudsman recommendations; • organisations are asked to confirm that they have acted on recommendations within 3 months.
STRUCTURE OF SCHEME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • statutory scheme, ombudsman accountable to Parliament; ombudsman appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the government; • standards of service published in annual report; • office has 6 internal professionals, 4 advisers, appoints external professionals on a case-by-case basis

3. The Banking Ombudsman

ROLE	Independent and impartial body that investigates complaints about banking services
COMPLAINANTS	Individuals, partnerships, unincorporated bodies; small companies; personal representative of dead person; customer of bank in services in UK
COMPLAINTS COVERED	Negligence, maladministration in connection with banking services, credit card services, executor and trustee services, advice and services relating to taxation, insurance and investments
COMPLAINTS NOT COVERED	Complaints about a bank's commercial decisions, e.g. interest rate, complaints involving claims of more than £100,000, complaints that are subject to court proceedings
PROCEDURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complainants must have exhausted bank's internal complaints procedure, reached deadlock and then contact the Ombudsman scheme directly within 6 months; complete complaints form, which includes waiver of confidentiality; • case is assigned to an adjudicator for a full investigation under the supervision of a team leader (Ombudsman, Deputy Ombudsman, Assistant Ombudsman) who investigates with criteria-fairness, relevant rules of law, good banking practice, based on the Code of Banking Practice and other standards; • investigates through examining documentation and interviews; • progress reports produced until final report
REMEDIES	Financial compensation, failure for bank to comply would lead Ombudsman to make a (Formal Award), the Board can sue a bank and expel from the scheme, average timescale of investigation: 193 days
STRUCTURE OF SCHEME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set up as an unlimited company; • voluntary membership but it is a requirement of the Code of Banking Practice; • overseen by a Council and a Board; Council comprised of 8 members – 5 independent, 3 bank appointees; • Council safeguards independence of Ombudsman, secure adequate funds from banks, appoints Ombudsman (3 yr term), receive reports; • 28 operational staff and 13 admin. staff; • running cost in 1996: £2,204,000

4. The Independent Housing Ombudsman

ROLE	Independent and impartial body that investigates complaints about housing services
COMPLAINANTS	Tenants; applicants for a property; representative of complainant (e.g. relative); not groups
COMPLAINTS COVERED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal injustice as a result of maladministration; • failure to comply with any relevant legal obligations or codes of practice; • negligence, incompetence, delay etc.
COMPLAINTS NOT COVERED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commercial decisions, rent rates, service charges, neighbour disputes • complaints which are subject to court proceedings
PROCEDURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete complaints form; • investigate complaints under criteria: statutory duties, common law, contracts and agreements, landlord's own statements of practice, good practice; • progress reports and publish final report with findings and recommendations; • formal investigation takes approx 6-12 months; • Ombudsman cannot enforce compliance with recommendations
REMEDIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial compensation; • recommend a reversal or amendment to a decision or making an apology; • recommend landlord to change procedures; • expel member landlord from scheme
STRUCTURE OF SCHEME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ombudsman overseen by Board 12 directors – one-third to be representative of landlords, one-third of tenants, and one-third of the public interest; • Board monitors scheme's performance, appoints Ombudsman (4 yr.) • Staff of 6 external investigators and arbitrators are appointed from a panel • Cost: £509,155 in 1995

ANNEX 2 • *Alternative Mechanisms of Accountability*

In addition to an in depth study of the concept of an ombudsman, this paper provides a cursory examination of alternative mechanisms of accountability for use within the humanitarian sector. These include:

- Watchdog/Regulator
- Social Auditing
- Accreditation & Standards
- Professional Institutes

The following provides a short description and example of each mechanism.

Watchdog/Regulator

A Regulator or Watchdog, (a theoretical 'OfAid') has the role of ensuring that consumers or end users of a service receive a fair deal and are not abused or misrepresented by enterprises that are profit driven. The regulator approach has a particularly important role to play when the service provider is in a uniquely strong position or is a monopoly and would therefore have a disproportionate advantage over its clients. As an external body, it normally relies on the power of legislation to mandate the quality of performance or on the threat of boycott as leverage to ensure the 'fair deal'. The Watchdog/regulator's focus on the end user and the feedback from the end user in determining performance, results in externally enforced improvements.

In the humanitarian sector, communities receiving humanitarian assistance may have little option in the choice of service provider. Once an agency has been selected to deliver a program, the community may have even less influence over the quality of product or service delivered by the agency, as a result of the near monopolistic position that the agency holds.

Social Auditing

The principal aim of social auditing is to assess organisational performance against goals that are broader than merely the financial bottom line. The concept is becoming increasingly popular with commercial organisations wishing to demonstrate that they are acting as responsible members of society and have a coherent social agenda.

However the approach is still most utilised by organisations motivated primarily by an ideal. These organisations' shareholders are not necessarily looking for a financial return on their investment but for a return on an investment in the ideal. In order to measure organisational

success the social auditor examines and catalogues the expectations of these shareholders and then evaluates whether these expectations have been met. Suppliers may have sold to the organisation in the hope and expectation that they will be treated in a way that is different to a purely market driven approach and will thereby enjoy a return on their labour that is fair. Staff who work for these organisations have signed on often for reasons beyond simple financial reward and similarly may have 'social' expectations of the organisation. Finally customers often buy the product, not because it provides the best value for money, but because they wish to satisfy alternative goals. With these characteristics in mind, organisations who opt for the social audit do so because there is more at stake than simply the bottom line financial performance. It must also meet the alternative goals of its staff, suppliers, shareholders and customers to guarantee its success. Various indicators are chosen, in consultation with the stakeholders, and are measured in a relatively scientific way, and produced by way of a separate annual report.

The humanitarian sector (including its suppliers, staff and clients) is clearly motivated by non-financial, profit-driven aims. Consequently, the tools of the social audit can be adapted by the humanitarian sector to ensure that its social commitments are being met.

Traidcraft Plc's Social Audit

Perhaps the best-known application of a social audit, Traidcraft plc's programme shows the potential benefits in terms of improved accountability that are obtainable through this model. Although it is not an NGO, Traidcraft's focus on benefits to people other than shareholders increasingly demanded the measurement of social and ethical performance for continued success. Importantly, the programme focused on implementing structures that could be re-used by other organisations. The key stages of Traidcraft's social audit process were as follows:

- *Identify stakeholders:* key groups including over 100 producer-suppliers, its customers and staff, over 2000 voluntary representatives, and 3000 shareholders.
- *Identify stakeholder aims and indicators:* a process of consultation with each stakeholder group that allowed them to establish criteria for future performance evaluation.
- *Production of draft social accounts:* an exercise which demonstrated the difficulty of achieving the correct balance between 'hard', quantitative data and qualitative information relevant to the complex social and ethical issues facing the organisation.
- *Publication of the accounts:* the final step, the publication of the social accounts coincided with that of the financial audit, highlighting the importance of the former. All stakeholders received a copy of the audit, which was also placed on public record for future comparison.

Traidcraft's social audits to date have made the organisation more aware of the ways in which different stakeholder groups are affected by its activities, and have unquestionably led to the introduction of new working processes and procedures accordingly.

Accreditation

Accreditation schemes tend to be educational and supportive services that encourage and assist organisations or individuals to improve and sustain their professional standards. The system relies on an external and somewhat independent check that the operating systems are in place to provide reasonable assurance of conformance with professional standards. As a means of promoting customer confidence, a certificate of conformity is usually issued to qualifying organisations. An examiner would typically choose a recent project at random, working through the appropriate documentation to ensure that policies and processes enshrined within an organisational quality manual are being followed in reality. It is not the intention of the review to challenge the auditor's judgement over the audit conclusions reached. The review is rather a check that the systems in place are adequate; whether an organisation's systems of quality control provide reasonable assurance of conformance with professional standards. This should result in increased stakeholder confidence in an organisation's capability, reliability, and probity, not to mention its capacity for self-regulation.

The Accreditation Framework

Accreditation schemes tend to be educational and supportive services that encourage and assist organisations to improve and sustain their professional standards. The process is generally:

- 1 Applicant applies to accrediting body for certification
- 2 Initial audit conducted by accredited auditor at applicant's premises
- 3 'To do' checklist prepared by auditor for applicant, highlighting areas for improvement before accreditation may be obtained
- 4 Auditor works with applicant to raise standards of practice to required level
- 5 When ready, applicant undergoes full audit by certifying examiner
- 6 Certificate issued by accrediting body
- 7 Review process repeated on an annual basis.

The following list is a sample of commonly evaluated criteria:

- End-to-end business processes, fully articulated and documented as procedures in Quality Manual
- Proof of current, working complaints procedure
- Simple, documented audit trails for major expenditure and business decisions
- Appropriate Human Resource policy, including the number of appropriate staff employed, their qualifications, training, appraisal, and supervision
- Adherence to standards of professional practice, where appropriate
- Environmental policy

Professional Institutes

Professional institutes provide for the registration of staff, and ensure that appropriate training has been undertaken and that registrants skills are kept up to date with incoming processes and technology. Technical institutes, such as engineers associations, doctors, or pharmacists are common in most countries around the World. Such institutes are not often found in 'non-professionalised' sectors, such as the voluntary sector, however, can be adapted for use to help to promote the professional conduct of the sector to ensure that the highest product or service is delivered.

RedR's Registered Engineers for Disaster Relief

RedR, a UK-based NGO provides a registration system for a variety of professionals wishing to work in the humanitarian sector and is not limited solely to engineers. It also offers training in technical aspects, safety and security, and management areas.

A detailed selection process involves the application by individuals, interviews with professionals, assessment and follow-up with previous employers. A detailed database keeps track of registrants' skills, from field placement, training and languages, to personal qualities and follow-up assessments of formal placements.

Other agencies requiring qualified professionals in the field call upon RedR to do a search of their database, based on their needs, and are provided with a list of professionals from which to interview.

Annex 3 • *The Inter-Agency Steering Group, The Reference Group, and the Working Group*

1. Purpose of the Inter-agency Steering Group

The Inter-agency Steering Group (SG) provides overall direction for the Ombudsman Project as described in the project description and ensures that the Project Output is achieved.

2. Project Output

- To research the Ombudsman concept generally
- To consider this and alternative forms of self-regulation in regards to relevance and appropriateness for humanitarian assistance
- To develop an appropriate model of the ombudsman concept for application to humanitarian assistance
- To present a report and recommendation to humanitarian agencies at the 1998 World Disasters Forum

3. Project Duration

1 November 1997 to 30 June 1998

4. Membership of Inter-agency Steering Group*

Christopher Besse,*	MERLIN	Vincent Coulton,*	CARE
Margie Buchanan-Smith,	ACTIONAID	Alastair Hallam,	ODI
Mukesh Kapila,*	DFID	Bobby Lambert,	RedR
Angela Penrose,*	SCF	Nicholas Stockton,	OXFAM
Jeff Thindwa,	WV(UK)	Head, IPPAD(vacant)*	British Red Cross

Additional members as may be invited at the first meeting of the SG.

* Members have changed during the course of the Study and now include Alistair Troup, Merlin, Robert Walker, DFID, Peter Hawkins, SCF, Howard Bell, CARE, Richard Blewitt, BRCS

5. Inter-agency Steering Group Meeting Attendance

- To attend three SG meetings
- To attend one of two Reference Group Meetings
- To attend the presentation of the final report at 1998 World Disasters Forum in London

6. Responsibilities of the Inter-agency Steering Group

- To remain informed about the project and its general location within the current debate concerning greater accountability in humanitarian assistance
- To read all SG briefing documents
- To discuss key issues and give direction to the project and to monitor progress toward the Project Output
- To represent the views and position of their own organisation concerning the project
- To endeavour to create opportunities for dialogue among humanitarian agencies and within their own organisations about the project

Ombudsman Project, Reference Group

Jane Belton	Christian Children's Fund
Jenny Brown	Christian Aid
Matthew Carter	CAFOD
Vincent Coultan	CARE International UK
Estelle Fleming	World Emergency Relief
Christine Fougere	Rights and Humanity
Jim Henry	Independent Consultant
Anne-Marie Huby	Medecins Sans Frontieres
Sofia Iqbal	Rights and Humanity
Peter James	ACORD
Nick Leader	ODI
Martin Lee	Christian Outreach
John McGrath	OXFAM
Argentina Mataval	Worldvision International (Mozambique)
Mark McKeown	Children's Aid Direct
Steven Penny	Tear Fund
Susan Purdin	Sphere Project
Peter Raven	Help Age International
Doug Sinclair	ADRA-UK
Hugo Slim	Oxford Brookes University
Frances Stevenson	Medecins Sans Frontieres
Koenraad van Brabant	ODI
Anthony Zwi	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Members of the Working Group

Warren Lancaster	–	Project Manager
John Mitchell	–	Project Coordinator
David Peppiatt	–	Project Researcher
Mark Thompson	–	Project Researcher
Ian Christoplos	–	Project Researcher
Deborah Doane	–	Project Researcher

Annex 4 • People Consulted for this Study

Eduardo Abbott,
Executive Secretary,
World Bank Inspection Panel,
Washington

Gordon Adams,
Secretary,
British and Irish Ombudsmans Association

Ilicia Anderson
Project Officer, Disaster Response
Tear Fund

John Arthur,
Executive Director,
ADRA

Howard Bell
Overseas Director,
CARE International UK

Christopher Besse
Former Chief Executive,
MERLIN

James Bishop
Director for Humanitarian Response,
InterAction Washington

Richard Bissell,
Former Chairman,
World Bank Inspection Panel,
Washington

Richard Blewitt,
Consultant/Seconded
Interagency Support Branch,
Department of Humanitarian Affairs,
Geneva

British Red Cross International Advisory
Committee

Ernst-Gunther Broder,
Panel Member,
World Bank Inspection Panel,
Washington

Jenny Brown,
Policy Adviser,
Great Lakes Advocacy Network of Ecumenical
Agencies,
London

Margie Buchanan-Smith,
Head of Emergency Unit,
Actionaid

Matthew Carter,
Emergencies Officer,
CAFOD

Dana Clark,
Senior Attorney,
Centre for International Environmental Law
Washington

Richard Corden,
Head of Charity Standards,
Charity Commission for England and Wales

Vincent Coultan,
Head of Policy,
Care International UK

Michael Edwards,
Edwards Associates

John Eriksson,
Author of Synthesis Report,
Joint Evaluation of Emergency Response to Rwanda,
Washington

Christine Fougere
Rights and Humanity

Alistair Hallam,
Research Fellow
Overseas Development Institute

Danielle Helle,
United Nations Centre for Human Rights,
Geneva

Anne Marie Huby,
Executive Director
Medecins Sans Frontiers UK

Peter James
Programme Director,
ACORD

Chris Kaye,
Interagency Support Branch,
Department of Humanitarian Affairs (now OCHA)
Geneva

Oliva Klevan,
Public Affairs Officer,
Consumers Association

Bobby Lambert,
Director,
Red R

Anthony Land,
Senior Fund Raising Officer,
Fund Raising Services,
UNHCR,
Geneva

Martin Lee,
Director,
Christian Outreach

Antonia Macedo,
Assistant Executive Secretary,
World Bank Inspection Panel,
Washington

James MacNeil
Panel Member,
World Bank Inspection Panel,
Washington

Dayton Maxwell,
Senior Advisor,
Complex Emergencies,
World Vision International
Washington

Joel McClellan,
Executive Secretary
SCHR
Geneva

Mark McKeown,
Director of Programmes,
Childrens Aid Direct

Steve Penny,
Disaster Response Manager,
Tear Fund

Angela Penrose,
Head of Policy,
Save the Children Fund

Susan Purdin,
Project Manager
Sphere Project,
Geneva

Alvaro Umana Quesada,
Chairman,
World Bank Inspection Panel

Peter Raven,
Director Programmes,
Helpage International

David Riley,
Chief, Programme Co-ordination Section,
UNHCR, Geneva

Emma Roberts
Project Officer, Disaster Response
Tear Fund

Iesha Singh,
Action Against Hunger

Frances Stevenson,
Programme Manager,
Medecins Sans Frontieres UK

Nicholas Stockton,
Emergencies Director,
Oxfam

Jeff Thindwa,
Director of Relief and Development,
World Vision UK

Kay Treagle,
Director,
Early Warning Programme,
The Bank Information Centre,
Washington

Alastair Troup,
Chief Executive,
MERLIN

Carlo van Flue (and group),
Delegate
ICRC,
Geneva

Robert Walker,
Programme Officer,
Conflict & Humanitarian Affairs Department
Department For International Development

Peter Walker,
Director Disaster Policy
International Federation of Red Cross and Red
Crescent Societies,
Geneva

Marlene Winfield,
Senior Policy & Development Officer:
National Consumers Council

Anthony Zwi,
Head, Health Policy Unit,
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Annex 5 • Website Page

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The
OMBUDSMAN
for
HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE
FEASIBILITY STUDY

NGO Survey - Give us your feedback!

The purpose of this survey is to gather input particularly from southern-based organisations and individuals who might have an interest in the workings of a Humanitarian Ombudsman. Perhaps you represent beneficiaries or have been the recipient of humanitarian assistance in the past. When you provide the contact information, please let us know if you wish your input to be kept confidential.

After reading the background material presented, please answer the following three questions:

1. Would people and/or local agencies participate actively in the Ombudsman process?

Yes ☐ No ☐ I am not sure ☒

If so, how? If not, why not?

	▲
	▼
◀	▶

2. How would you foresee the Ombudsman for Humanitarian Assistance gaining access to beneficiaries or beneficiaries gaining access to the Ombudsman?

	▲
	▼
◀	▶

3. What would you want a Humanitarian Ombudsman to consider?

	▲
	▼
◀	▶

4. Other Comments

Name

Organisation

Address

Telephone

Fax

E-mail

Confidential? Yes ☐ No ☒

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Annex 6 • *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*

Sponsored by: Caritas Internationalis, Catholic Relief Services*, The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*, International Save the Children Alliance*, Lutheran World Federation*, Oxfam*, The World Council of Churches*, The International Committee of the Red Cross.*

Purpose

This Code of Conduct seeks to guard our standards of behaviour. It is not about operational details, such as how one should calculate food rations or set up a refugee camp. Rather, it seeks to maintain the high standards of independence, effectiveness and impact to which disaster response NGOs and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement aspires. It is a voluntary code, enforced by the will of organisation accepting it to maintain the standards laid down in the Code.

In the event of armed conflict, the present Code of Conduct will be interpreted and applied in conformity with international humanitarian law.

The Code of Conduct is presented first. Attached to it are three annexes, describing the working environment that we would like to see created by Host Governments, Donor Governments and Intergovernmental Organisations in order to facilitate the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Definitions

NGOs NGOs (Non Governmental Organisations) refers here to organisations, both national and international, which are constituted separate from the government of the country in which they are founded.

NGHAs For the purposes of this text, the term Non Governmental Humanitarian Agencies (NGHAs) has been coined to encompass the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – The International Committee of the Red Cross, The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and its member National Societies – and the NGOs as defined above. This code refers specifically to those NGHAs who are involved in disaster response.

IGOs IGOs (Inter Governmental Organisations) refers to organisations constituted by two or more governments. It thus includes all United Nations Agencies and regional organisations.

Disasters A disaster is a calamitous event resulting in loss of life, great human suffering and distress, and large scale material damage.

* Members of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response

The Code of Conduct

Principles of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes

1. The Humanitarian imperative comes first

The right to receive humanitarian assistance, and to offer it, is a fundamental humanitarian principle which should be enjoyed by all citizens of all countries. As members of the international community, we recognise our obligation to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed. Hence the need for unimpeded access to affected populations, is of fundamental importance in exercising that responsibility. The prime motivation of our response to disaster is to alleviate human suffering amongst those least able to withstand the stress caused by disaster. When we give humanitarian aid it is not a partisan or political act and should not be viewed as such.

2. Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone

Wherever possible, we will base the provision of relief aid upon a thorough assessment of the needs of the disaster victims and the local capacities already in place to meet those needs. Within the entirety of our programmes, we will reflect considerations of proportionality. Human suffering must be alleviated whenever it is found; life is as precious in one part of a country as another. Thus, our provision of aid will reflect the degree of suffering it seeks to alleviate. In implementing this approach, we recognise the crucial role played by women in disaster prone communities and will ensure that this role is supported, not diminished, by our aid programmes. The implementation of such a universal, impartial and independent policy, can only be effective if we and our partners have access to the necessary resources to provide for such equitable relief, and have equal access to all disaster victims.

3. Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint

Humanitarian aid will be given according to the need of individuals, families and communities. Notwithstanding the right of NGHAs to espouse particular political or religious opinions, we affirm that assistance will not be dependent on the adherence of the recipients to those opinions. We will not tie the promise, delivery or distribution of assistance to the embracing or acceptance of a particular political or religious creed.

4. We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy

NGHAs are agencies which act independently from governments. We therefore formulate our own policies and implementation strategies and do not seek to implement the policy of any government, except in so far as it coincides with our own independent policy. We will never knowingly – or through negligence – allow ourselves, or our employees, to be used to gather information of a political, military or economically sensitive nature for governments or other bodies that may serve purposes other than those which are strictly humanitarian, nor will we act as

instruments of foreign policy of donor governments. We will use the assistance we receive to respond to needs and this assistance should not be driven by the need to dispose of donor commodity surpluses, nor by the political interest of any particular donor. We value and promote the voluntary giving of labour and finances by concerned individuals to support our work and recognise the independence of action promoted by such voluntary motivation. In order to protect our independence we will seek to avoid dependence upon a single funding source.

5. We shall respect culture and custom.

We will endeavour to respect the culture, structures and customs of the communities and countries we are working in.

6. We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities

All people and communities – even in disaster – possess capacities as well as vulnerabilities. Where possible, we will strengthen these capacities by employing local staff, purchasing local materials and trading with local companies. Where possible, we will work through local NGHAs as partners in planning and implementation, and co-operate with local government structures where appropriate. We will place a high priority on the proper co-ordination of our emergency responses. This is best done within the countries concerned by those most directly involved in the relief operations, and should include representatives of the relevant UN bodies.

7. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid

Disaster response assistance should never be imposed upon the beneficiaries. Effective relief and lasting rehabilitation can best be achieved where the intended beneficiaries are involved in the design, management and implementation of the assistance programme. We will strive to achieve full community participation in our relief and rehabilitation programmes.

8. Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs

All relief actions affect the prospects for long term development, either in a positive or a negative fashion. Recognising this, we will strive to implement relief programmes which actively reduce the beneficiaries' vulnerability to future disasters and help create sustainable lifestyles. We will pay particular attention to environmental concerns in the design and management of relief programmes. We will also endeavour to minimise the negative impact of humanitarian assistance, seeking to avoid long term beneficiary dependence upon external aid.

9. We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources

We often act as an institutional link in the partnership between those who wish to assist and those

who need assistance during disasters. We therefore hold ourselves accountable to both constituencies. All our dealings with donors and beneficiaries shall reflect an attitude of openness and transparency. We recognise the need to report on our activities, both from a financial perspective and the perspective of effectiveness. We recognise the obligation to ensure appropriate monitoring of aid distributions and to carry out regular assessments of the impact of disaster assistance. We will also seek to report, in an open fashion, upon the impact of our work, and the factors limiting or enhancing that impact. Our programmes will be based upon high standards of professionalism and expertise in order to minimise the wasting of valuable resources.

10. In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects

Respect for the disaster victim as an equal partner in action should never be lost. In our public information we shall portray an objective image of the disaster situation where the capacities and aspirations of disaster victims are highlighted, and not just their vulnerabilities and fears. While we will co-operate with the media in order to enhance public response, we will not allow external or internal demands for publicity to take precedence over the principle of maximising overall relief assistance. We will avoid competing with other disaster response agencies for media coverage in situations where such coverage may be to the detriment of the service provided to the beneficiaries or to the security of our staff or the beneficiaries.