

## **Auditor's Statement for The Leprosy Mission International**

based on 'TLMI Social Audit 2004-2005', 'The Leprosy Mission Staff Guidelines 2005' and Auditor's visit to TLMI, 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2005.

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### **Auditor's remit, independence and qualifications**

The auditor has been appointed by People In Aid to carry out audits of the reports submitted by member agencies on their performance against the People In Aid Code of Good Practice in the management and support of aid personnel.

The auditor is otherwise independent of both People In Aid and the member agencies and their stakeholders.

Richard Evans, the auditor, the director of ethics etc.... is a Certified Member of the Institute of Social and Ethical AccountAbility. He has extensive experience of development (Intermediate Technology Development Group and Traidcraft) and has been involved in developing AccountAbility's AA1000 Reporting Framework and Assurance Standard and the GRI Sustainability Reporting Guidelines.

### **Assurance standard**

The report and the management systems and accounts have been audited in accordance with the Institute of Social and Ethical AccountAbility's AA1000 Assurance Standard. The Guiding Principles of the AA1000 Assurance Standard are that the report is **complete**, that the information it contains is **material** to the interests and concerns of the organisation's stakeholders and that the organisation has stated how it is **responding** to the issues raised.

### **Audit objective**

The objective of the audit is to provide People In Aid, and The Leprosy Mission, with assurance that the reports submitted

- i. cover all significant material aspects of The Leprosy Mission's performance in relation to the People In Aid Code,
- ii. in a fair and balanced presentation,
- iii. that there is evidence to support the statements made,
- iv. and that the organisation is responding to issues identified.

### **Scope of the reports**

The Social Audit Report 2004-2005, in the format I examined, described the process of a personnel policies and strategy review, describes the methodology for the staff survey and analyses the results in relation to each of the People In Aid Code Principles. It also set out recommendations for the next review and an action plan responding to the staff survey results.

Since my remit is to consider the performance of the organisation in relation to the People In Aid Code it necessarily includes examining the policies in place and the effectiveness with which the agency implements these policies. The staff survey provides an essential stakeholder perspective on: how effectively these policies have been communicated to staff; and on the extent to which staff believe they are effectively implemented.

I therefore considered 'The Leprosy Mission Staff Guidelines 2005' document as an integral part of the reporting I examined, as well as relevant sections of the May 2005 Board General Report. I consider that these reports, together with the supporting evidence I examined during the audit, cover The Leprosy Mission's performance in relation to all the People In Aid Principles of Good Practice in the management and support of aid personnel.

In discussions at the end of the audit, TLMI indicated that they would consider revising the Social Audit Report to included references to the relevant personnel policies and summary performance data where relevant and available.

### **Basis of auditor's opinion**

The audit is based on the report submitted to the auditor, The Leprosy Mission Staff Guidelines 2005, interviews with relevant managers in the organisation and an examination of management systems and data relevant to the People In Aid Code of Good Practice. It did not include visits to field offices or interviews with aid and development personnel other than managers in the head office. However, it did involve reviewing the process and examining the results of a survey of employees carried out by the agency during the second half of 2004.

I also reviewed TLMI's General Report prepared for it's May 2005 International Board Meeting by the General Director and International Directors and The Operational Plan 2006, and discussed relevant aspects of these with the General Director and Director for Personnel.

During my visit to The Leprosy Mission I had detailed discussions with June Nash, Director for Personnel, Pam Pilkington, Personnel Officer and Trevor Durston, General Director.

### **Auditor's Opinion**

I welcome the planning and actions by the personnel department to adopt an inclusive approach in the survey to all staff, whether directly employed by TLMI, at the Brentford International Office and as International Field staff, or employed by the various national Leprosy Mission organisations.

**Completeness:** On the basis of the work I carried out I am satisfied that The Leprosy Mission has considered all aspects and Principles of the People In Aid Code, in assessing its human resource policies, management systems and practices, and in this respect the report is complete. There were some areas where performance monitoring systems are lacking or the data incomplete. This is largely due to the structure of the organisation where out of some 2000 staff only 63 are directly employed by TLMI.

**Materiality:** The Leprosy Mission carried out a detailed employee opinion survey in the second half of 2004, using questionnaires where language ability and cultural appropriateness permitted, and workshops and focus group discussions, where they did not.

In spite of lengthy and careful planning, involving an international committee of personnel directors and regional or country directors, the response to the questionnaire was poor, with only 83 staff responding. Many more people were involved in social audit survey workshops and focus groups and the resulting 'qualitative' findings have been well reported. While the level of response to the questionnaire raises questions about the statistical validity of the results for all segments, apart from the Brentford International Office, the spread across segments was good and the Mission believes that the views expressed are consistent with the qualitative survey results and useful. The responses have been reported exhaustively and interpreted fairly. I am satisfied that the two surveys have addressed issues material to the interests of employees.

**Responsiveness:** Management responses have been identified for each Code Principal based on the findings of the employee survey and the examination of management systems and data.

**The Social Audit Report and Staff Guidelines, together with the management information I examined, provide a reliable and fair account of The Leprosy Mission's performance against the People In Aid Code. On this basis, in my opinion, TLMI operates in accordance with the People In Aid Code of Good Practice in the management and support of its personnel.**

#### **Additional Comments**

I welcome the statement by the Director for Personnel on Personnel Issues for 2006 in the Operational Plan 2006 submitted to the December 2006 Board. This clearly indicates that the findings of the Policy Review with stakeholders and the Staff Survey have been recognised and appropriate actions proposed, in the light of the Mission's overall strategy, and put in motion to address weaknesses that were identified: in accessibility to and use by managers of The Staff Guidelines; communication and consultation, particularly in relation to the Mission's values; regional responsibility for training and the development of personal training plans; reviewing promotion criteria; training in management and coaching; developing a comprehensive rewards strategy; developing some additional policies and guidelines on health and safety issues, including stress and work-life balance.

The Mission has over the past year undertaken an extensive General Enquiry into its operations. In his General Overview for the 2006 Operational Plan, the General Director writes, "It is fully recognised that one of the conclusions of the General Enquiry Report was that the Mission has not yet been able to develop a comprehensive strategic planning approach," and that, "additional resources will need to be applied in order to do that." The New Vision that has emerged from a strategic review carried out in 2004 places an increased emphasis on community development, targeting individuals and communities affected by leprosy.

One conclusion from the General Enquiry is that the changing political environment and evolving structure of the Mission's field operations requires devolution of responsibility to local organisations. The General Director has signalled that this requires a substantial shift in culture throughout the organisation and that considerable emphasis will need to be placed on recruiting people with the right skills and experience and extensive management training. This will have significant implications for the future work of the Personnel Department. The Mission's commitment to the People In Aid Code will provide a robust foundation to guide this work.

In planning future staff surveys I recommend that steps are taken to ensure maximum participation by directly employed staff, Brentford office and International staff, and that arrangements are made with regional and national TLM bodies for suitably adapted surveys to take place at the same time. While a common set of issues and questions should be used in both, they may also each include issues and questions related to the specific situation of the staff involved. In place of the 'model' questionnaire from People In Aid used in the present survey, consultations should take place with groups of staff from all sectors to establish the issues they consider material to their needs and aspirations as well as information identified by TLMI's international personnel officers needed to corroborate and comment on performance against the People In Aid Code Principles.

TLMI should undertake a review of personnel policy performance measures and build these into regular reporting by Field Directors and Personnel Department reports to the Board. In addition the Personnel Department should undertake annual reviews of the Action Plan, included in the Social Audit Report, and report on progress to the General Director and Board.

I am grateful to The Leprosy Mission and particularly Pam Pilkington and June Nash, for the care demonstrated in preparing the report and for their co-operation throughout my investigation.

Richard Evans

*ethics etc...*

24<sup>th</sup> November 2005