

AI INDEX: ORG 53/003/2009

All sections and structures

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT
Peter Benenson House, 1 Easton Street
London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)20 7413 5500 F: +44 (0)20 7956 1157
E: amnestyis@amnesty.org W: www.amnesty.org

Dear friends,

CALL FOR VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Decision 15 of the 2009 International Council Meeting (ICM) states in paragraph 1(c) “The balance of all AI spending will shift from the current proportion of 70:30 to a goal of 60:40¹ by the end of the plan period. This change will be made with an initial step of between 5 million Euros and 5% of the annual total global gross income to be paid over the first two years of the ISP, by additional voluntary contributions.”

Decision 15 also states that the proposal for a new assessment and distribution system will be submitted to the 2011 ICM. The initial step of between 5 million Euros and 5% of the annual total global gross income is therefore aimed at the two year period between now and the 2011 ICM: though we have no mechanism yet to ensure that a greater share of the global funds goes to the global movement and to projects in the Global South, the ICM wants us to start with this shift from local to global on a voluntary basis.

As the ‘annual total global gross income’ amounts to approximately 200 million Euros² it means that the ICM has decided on voluntary contributions between 5 and 10 million Euros for this two-year period.

With the decision of the 2005 ICM to move from assessment to contribution, the movement started to debate the need to globalize our resources, to think about where and how these are spent, to align the available funds with our global plans and global priorities and to maximize our human rights impact, for example by working on a better distribution of these resources, especially towards the Global South. The concept moved from ‘contribution’ to ‘(re)distribution’ and thus A2D (‘from Assessment to Distribution’) was born.

Over the subsequent three years we analyzed the issue, we exchanged views, we debated, we expressed our concerns, we calculated the impact on the global movement and on our funding sections. We did that at three International Finance Meetings, at the Chairs Forums, at the 2007 ICM and in many other fora. The 2008 Taskforce on “Assessment to Distribution” further developed the rationale for

¹ “60” refers to the proportion of gross income spent locally and “40” refers to the proportion of gross income contributed to the global budget.

² 2009 ICM Circular 42 (FIN 40/008/2009) gives AI’s aggregate income as 208.5 million Euros in the year ending 31 December 2008

redistribution, made ten strong recommendations³ and laid the groundwork for the IEC resolution on the subject for the 2009 ICM. Intense discussions and drafting by many sections, structures and delegates allowed *Working Party 4: Our resources* to design Decision 15 that confirms the broad goals of the resolution while allowing for time and analysis before implementing changes. 'From Assessment to Distribution' was adopted with an overwhelming majority.

All discussions over the last few years and certainly the constructive debates at the ICM proved that the movement is fully behind the idea of managing the available funds more globally, and all sections and structures support the principle of more and better (re)distribution.

The strong political commitment on A2D must now be translated in concrete and effective implementation.

We have defined the Terms of Reference of the A2D Taskforce (FIN 61/002/2009) and have launched the call for nominations. As we have a lot to cover between now and the 2011 ICM we want to move fast in developing all the mechanisms needed to achieve our political goals.

Before releasing part or all of the 10 million Euros to "finance carefully considered strategic growth projects in areas where AI has a small presence or no presence, or where it is under-performing in a developed area" we will first implement Decision 14 of the 2009 ICM and develop the (business) plans for these projects. Therefore we expect to start implementing this part of Decision 15 only after the 2011 ICM.

The voluntary contributions are now very important for different reasons. There is of course the clear decision of the ICM and the strong support of the sections and structures to do so.

The International Mobilization Trust (IMT) has already done impressive work in developing growth in the Global South through local sections and structures. A lot of the funds available for grants came from important voluntary contributions. The number and the amount of these contributions have, however, decreased dramatically since the end of 2008.

Decision 11 of the 2009 ICM has instructed the IEC to develop a balanced budget for OP1 (1 April 2010 to 31 March 2012) within an envelope of £ 96.920 million. Although this envelope was calculated on the basis of the assessable income of the funding sections, the IEC has now decided to be more conservative and to ask the Secretary General to develop the OP1 budget for the IS on a no-growth basis for the income as well as for the expenses. This decision has been based on the uncertainty of the assessment payments of AI USA, on the plans of AI USA and the IS (together with a number of supporting sections) to invest in growth in AI USA, the need to provide for extra reserves as an active protection against the negative impact of currency fluctuations, the need to increase the free cash reserves of the IS in order to be better prepared for downturns like we experience right now with AI USA and the absolute necessity to allow for a contingency margin in the budget. Knowing that – due to the time lag between section income and assessment payments – the assessment income will be under pressure for quite some years, the no-growth decision is unavoidable and wise. The two-year envelope has now been set at £ 73 million.

Though the IEC has asked the Secretary General to carefully consider where and how cost savings and efficiency gains are possible, a no-growth budget will impact on all entities funded by the international budget: IS, IMT, the Movement Support budget, the decentralized language units EFAI and EDAI etc. For the IMT, for example, it would mean that their envelope for grants would be only £ 7.3 million instead of the forecasted £ 9.6 million.

Most funding sections have started to prepare their 2010 budgets. Whilst sections should also aim at realize cost savings in their operational performance, the IEC is proposing that all sections try to

³ Circular 7 'Implementing One Amnesty: IEC Proposals on "Assessment to Distribution" (ORG 50/001/2009)

include in their 2010 budget an extra voluntary contribution to the international budget. In order to achieve the goal set forth by Decision 15, funding sections should aim at an amount of at least 7.5% of their 2010 assessment. We would expect funding sections to make a similar effort in 2011. Sections who have recently experienced some exceptional income (for instance through legacies) are encouraged to go well beyond this indicative figure of 7.5% per year as there will be sections who will not be able to contribute at this stage.


These contributions are of utmost importance. Not only do they give a very practical implementation of the principles of which we have all agreed in at the ICM, but they will allow us to continue our support of smaller sections, structures and new projects in the Global South and hopefully help the IS to continue to perform its key duties, while creating space for all the new initiatives that the ISP 2010-2016 calls for.

As there is quite some uncertainty about the cash position of the IS the IEC encourages the sections to give their feedback to the International Treasurer (bernard.sintobin@amnesty.org) on what amount of voluntary contribution they have included in their budget as soon as possible. An indication of when these funds could be made available in 2010 would also be very helpful.

While we need information on the amount and the availability of these funds we want to make clear that the additional funds will be linked to the global plan and the global projects. The global management structure will decide on these priorities and projects after thorough consultation with the movement. Sections will be asked to release these funds only after we have a final OP1 budget, a clear view on the global movement's resources and on the plans and the projects of OP1.

The IEC is very much aware of the fact that all AI entities are struggling with the impact and the uncertainties of the general economic situation. In spite of this, many sections have succeeded to achieve their budgets and to grow. We trust that you understand the importance of these contributions and ask all boards and executives to cooperate with the IEC and the IS in maintaining the necessary levels of expenditure in order to maximise our relevance and our impact in achieving our human right goals.

For the IEC:



Peter Pack
Chair



Bernard Sintobin
International Treasurer