To *All sections and structures, members, partners, community-based organizations*
From *The International Committee for Strengthening Democracy*
Date *July 2008*

Strengthening Amnesty International's Democracy Consultation Pack 2

Part 1: A New Democratic Governance Model for Amnesty International

Summary

This second consultation pack comprises the following documents:

Executive Summary (ORG 10/007/2008)

Part 1: A New Governance Model for AI (ORG 10/008/2008)

Part 2: Governance Systems and Processes (ORG 10/009/2008)

Part 3: Questions & Answers (ORG 10/010/2008)

Distribution
This consultation pack is issued to all sections, structures and interested members as well as to selected partners and community-based organizations. The Executive Summary "Strengthening Democratic Governance" will also be made accessible on the internet.

Recommended Actions
Please ensure that this consultation pack is brought to the attention of the chair, board and director of your section/structure, and to those members, partners and other organizations interested in and/or most directly affected by AI's decisions and decision-making processes.

Both the discussions in the International Committee for Strengthening Democracy and the consultation process so far have identified as the cornerstones of AI's democracy

- Facilitating quality participation globally;
- of all key stakeholders (activists, members, partners, beneficiaries);
- at various levels as required and appropriate;
- in a transparent and fully accountable way;
- with governance focussed on strategic decision-making and control;
- and the executive implementing strategic decisions and facilitating control.

The structural changes recommended in this paper focus on these areas. They aim at building an Amnesty International engaged in lively discussions involving all of its stakeholders, a movement which is able to act, react and have a positive impact in due time with legitimacy and authority whenever required under its mission and its priorities, an AI not only for, but also with and of, people around the globe whose human rights are under threat.

Model Structure Overview
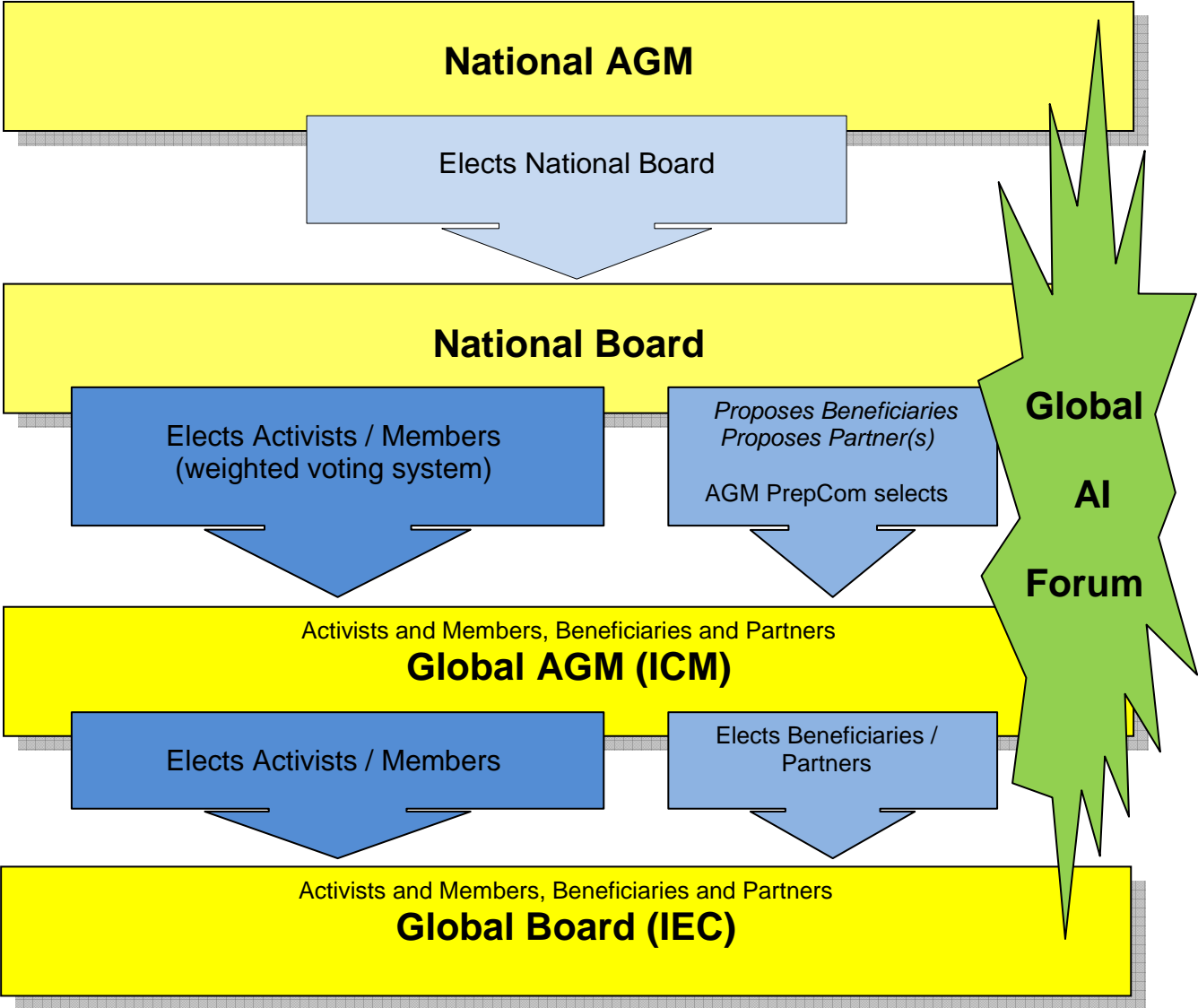
The global elements of the proposed new model are described in more detail below.

1. Global AI Forum

A lively democracy means everybody is – or at least can easily be – engaged. Engagement means contributing to the organization's forming of opinion, defining its strategies and achieving its objectives. It does not necessarily – and certainly not mainly – mean sitting on boards or assemblies. With the possibilities of today's technology to communicate and cooperate globally, immediate and ongoing engagement of most interested and/or concerned people around the world has become possible. Global platforms for communication and cooperation like YouTube, My Space and Wikipedia are impressive examples of what is possible. Sites like TakingITGlobal show how much interest there is in issues like human rights. A stronger and more inclusive democracy should make strategic use of the possibilities of technology to engage in a quality dialogue happening 24 hours a day, every day, in addition to its formal structures and meetings. Of course, the limited access to communication technologies by a significant number of those interested in and/or concerned by human rights issues, as well as language and cultural barriers, have to be taken into consideration.

A Global AI Forum would improve AI's global communication, discussion and consultation on strategic issues by involving in a meaningful and participatory way many more activists, but also partners, beneficiaries and external experts in AI discussions. This would increase AI's reach and effect, leveraging currently untapped know-how, expertise and potential inside and outside the movement and strengthening AI's legitimacy, transparency and accountability.

The Status Quo	Changed to	Will improve
Ad hoc discussions at various levels in different parts of the world - *mostly coincidental* - *mainly among AI members and activists* - *not systematically fed into governance decisions*	*Permanent, internet enabled online and offline discussion platform/space* - *with discussion groups* - *room for raising new issues* - *active recruitment of participants inside and outside AI* - *systematically evaluated and fed into AI governance decisions*	- *Many more activists involved / more often, more regularly* - *More inputs from beneficiaries, partners and external experts* - *Boards and AGMs know more about what activists, partners and beneficiaries think*
Most AI communication is one-way	*Much larger proportion is two-way communication (dialogue)*	- *More lively discussion and debate* - *More direct contributions to the development of AI strategies*
Highly formalised, channelled and practically closed consultation processes	*More open, accessible and inclusive consultations*	- *Broader and more diverse feedback* - *More interaction*
Most important discussion/debate (ICM) takes place only once every 24 months (plus some discussions in limited circles like e.g. Chairs Forum)	- *Ongoing global discussion/debate* - *Meetings as and when required*	- *Much more opportunity for discussion and exchange* - *Meeting when required to discuss instead of discussion when required by scheduled meeting*

The Global AI Forum, a global communication space/system accessible to all key stakeholders, will provide the platform for a much more extensive, inclusive and ongoing discussion and consultation process. Everybody, whether formally or informally linked to AI, will be able to use the Forum to raise issues, lobby for positions, initiate discussions, build coalitions etc. and AI's decision makers will be able to use the Forum to gather the activists', beneficiaries' and partners' opinions and to explain their own position.

The Global AI Forum is a mainly, but not exclusively, Internet based global communications space. In addition to the ongoing electronic debate, face to face meetings at national, regional and global levels should be conducted as and when required. The Global AI Forum:
- brings together activists, members, beneficiaries, partners, experts and AI staff;
- focuses AI's global discussions on key strategic issues;
- drives the organization's future agenda by providing inputs into the governing bodies' decision making processes.

In order to fulfil these functions the Global AI Forum would need to be:
- accessible globally;
- easy and fun to use;
- technically "state of the art" allowing global networking;
- non-discriminatory as far as possible (digital divide, language barriers and state censorship will need to be addressed appropriately to the extent realistically possible).

The Global AI Forum should provide a basis for the following activities:
- compilation and distribution of centrally (IEC, IS and S/S) and de-centrally (individuals, groups, networks, partners, beneficiaries) generated information;
- space for formal (organized) and informal (spontaneous) dialogue of a potentially unlimited number of participants;
- space for joint production of texts;
- facilitating global consultation;
- an AI library and resource centre;
- space to build various issue-, geographic- and other communities.

The Global AI Forum should be governed by a small, elected council (with staff support for management) that:
- makes sure the AI Forum is always meeting the users' expectations, developing its infrastructure as required;
- identifies key issues of the Forum's discussion and makes sure that AI's governing structures are aware of these;
- makes sure that the Forum is not used for activities damaging AI's reputation.

2. Global AGM (ICM)

Representing all key stakeholders, with a much smaller number of participants, but meeting annually, the Global AGM (ICM) would be able to lead AI's global governance more effectively, take decisions more frequently if needed, and fully include the perspectives of those AI wants to support.

The Status Quo	Changed to	Will improve
Large ICM every second year: - *not frequent enough to provide proper oversight on AI's governance* - *too large for effective decision making* - *changing composition at each meeting* - *does currently not fulfil its role as AI's highest governing body to the movement's full satisfaction*	*Smaller Global AGM (ICM) every year:* - *formal governance oversight twice as often* - *large enough to be representative of all major perspectives in AI* - *small enough for effective decision making* - *Terms of office (e.g. 3 years)*	- *Better / more timely control of the Global Board (IEC)* - *Key decisions do not have to wait so long to be taken* - *The process of decision making will be faster when needed and more reliable and predictable*
ICM with very limited involvement of beneficiaries and partners	*Global AGM (ICM) has sound mix of all key stakeholders including activists and members, beneficiaries and partners*	- *Decisions will much more reliably serve the people they intend to support* - *Legitimacy of AI's decisions will be less disputable*
Current ICM is in fact multipurpose, although not designed to fulfil such a variety of functions: strategic discussion, consultation and decision making, but also operational and policy decisions and coordination, training, internal lobbying, top-down communication, internal community building, etc.	*Global AGM (ICM) focuses much more on governance role, leaving the other functions of the current ICM to other meetings / spaces*	- *More time and energy devoted to really strategic issues* - *Better focus and quality of the discussions and decisions* - *clearer outcome and results*

Key Responsibilities

The Global AGM (ICM) is AI's highest governing body. It is AI's final supervisory entity. In its work it focuses on issues of the highest strategic importance. Key decisions the Global AGM (ICM) takes are:

- Election of the Global Board (IEC);
- Changes to Vision, Mission, Statutes and key policies;
- Approving the Integrated Strategic Plan;
- Approving the Global Budgets;
- Appointing Auditors and approving the Audited Accounts;
- Monitoring, evaluating and holding the Global Board (IEC) accountable, including follow-up on ICM decisions.

An elected PrepCom is authorised, empowered and mandated to ensure that only matters of highest strategic importance are brought to the Global AGM (ICM). The movement would have to agree on the criteria used to decide whether an issue is of key strategic importance or not.

Composition

Activists and members are the backbone of Amnesty International. They play a crucial role in all aspects of AI's work. While this is a core quality of the organization which needs to be preserved and strengthened, a stronger democracy is only possible with other key stakeholders fully on board. Best practice in governance puts a special emphasis on the role of beneficiaries in an organization's governing structures. It is not enough to do good "for" somebody without this person's involvement in determining appropriate solutions. Another crucial requirement of best practice in governance is a sufficient level of expertise and the right mix of skills. Beneficiaries and partners therefore are key stakeholders who should participate in AI's governance. By including beneficiaries and partners in its governance AI will be able to

- take decisions with greater legitimacy and relevance;
- act more decisively and with greater impact;
- adapt its strategies and tactics, its policies and programmes more immediately to the changing needs of the people it serves.

For the highest decision making body in AI, being representative of all of AI's key stakeholders is of paramount importance. When shaping the overall direction of the organization, it is crucial that both internal and external factors are carefully considered. It is proposed that AI's key stakeholders:

- Activists and Members,
- Beneficiaries and Partners,

should be represented in the Global AGM (ICM). This meeting should bring together those people who can make key contributions to AI's future relevance and success. The precise number of elected participants with voting rights (i.e. excluding the IEC, IS representatives, PrepCom etc.) would depend on the voting system we choose for electing them, but in order to allow for both, appropriate representation of all key stakeholders and effective decision making, it should be much smaller than the current ICM.

We have not yet come up with a proposal on how best to ensure an appropriate representation of AI's international members and welcome any suggestions.

Terms of Office and Meetings

- Members of the Global AGM (ICM) could be elected for fixed terms (e.g. three years). They could be re-elected once with a maximum time of e.g. six years of service on the Global AGM (ICM).
- In order to maintain continuity the terms of Global AGM (ICM) members should be staggered so that each year one third of the positions are due for (re-)election.
- The Global AGM (ICM) should meet once a year at the most appropriate time given the planning and auditing cycles.

Elections

The Global AGM (ICM) should elect the Global Board (IEC), which again should include representatives of activists and members, beneficiaries and partners securing diversity and gender balance. A Nominations Committee should run a pre-selection process making sure that the Global Board (IEC) has the right mix of high quality skills, reflects AI's key stakeholders and is appropriately diverse and gender balanced.

3. Global Board (IEC)

With all key stakeholders involved, high levels of competencies and the right mix of skills secured, the Global Board (IEC) would be able to deliver AI's global governance between Global AGMs (ICMs) more effectively, taking crucial strategic decisions more competently and providing effective supervision of the International Secretariat and other elements of AI's executive.

The Status Quo	*Changed to*	*Will improve*
Relatively small IEC often overwhelmed with breadth and depth of tasks: - *Substantial involvement in tasks which can be qualified as executive/operational* - *unbalanced mix of skills; some crucial skills can be missing*	*Similarly sized or slightly larger Board providing stronger strategic direction and better oversight of the executive:* - *focussed on strategic tasks* - *with all required key competencies*	- *Better strategic leadership of AI* - *Better oversight of the International Secretariat and other executive bodies of the movement* - *More trust in the leadership*
Representation/background mainly limited to activist/member perspective – no other stakeholders involved	*Board with sound mix of all key stakeholders including activists and members, beneficiaries and partners*	- *Decisions will much more reliably serve the people they intend to support* - *Legitimacy of AI decisions and relevance of AI work will be less disputable*
High turnover, short terms of office, unsystematic recruitment	*3-year terms of office, staggered elections, Nominations Committee tasked with pre-selection*	- *More continuity and reliability, long-term recruitment strategy*

Key Responsibilities
Key tasks of the Global Board (IEC) are:
- The overall strategic direction and development of AI globally;
- Holding Sections/Structures (boards and/or AGMs) accountable for complying with their commitments to the movement and ensuring compliance with AI's global rules and strategic plans;
- The appointment of the Secretary General;
- The agreement of the Secretary General's overall priorities and objectives and the monitoring of his or her performance in implementing those priorities and achieving those objectives;
- The pre-approval of global budgets, and any changes to such budgets during the year;
- The approval of operational plans;
- Fiduciary and other legal responsibilities.

Composition
Board members should be chosen on merit, background, professional disciplines and skills to suit strategic priorities and ensure organizational performance. Key skills available on the board should include expertise in human rights protection and promotion, advocacy, strategic planning, financial management, communications, media, marketing, PR, personnel and legal.

The Global Board (IEC) should be comprised of people who understand the needs and views of key stakeholders (activists and members, beneficiaries and partners). Boards consisting only of members who are predominantly of one profession, or one social class or level of wealth, or that fail to be gender balanced, are disadvantaged in bringing the breadth of experience, perspective and skill sets to the organization that are necessary for effective governance.

In order to ensure a solid mix of high calibre expertise in the professional sectors listed above, the size of the Global Board (IEC) should be similar to or slightly larger than the current IEC. Job specs for each Board position should contain the professional expertise the respective Board member is expected to bring. A Nominations Committee would be tasked with making sure that the Global Board (IEC) has the right mix of high quality skills, reflects AI's key stakeholders and is appropriately diverse and gender balanced.

Terms of Office
- Board members should be elected for three-years-terms. They could be re-elected twice with a maximum time of nine years of service on the Board.
- In order to maintain continuity, the terms of board members should be staggered so that each year one third of the board positions are due for (re-)election.

4. National AGMs and National Boards

A substantial part of the movement's democracy takes place at the national level. Democratic deficits at the national level are almost impossible to "compensate" at the international level. Therefore, in order to strengthen and better synchronise AI's governance, the various National AGMs and the various National Boards, while taking into consideration national specificities (legal environment, size of the section/structure etc.) should work under similar standards as the Global AGM (ICM) and the Global Board (IEC).

Elections: In a weighted voting system the National Boards would elect the Activist/Member representatives to the Global AGM (ICM). The ICSD has not yet looked at voting systems in depth, because we feel that we need to discuss and agree the principles first. However, we welcome any suggestions on what would be a desirable voting system and/or the criteria it should meet. The procedures and systems in each section and structure for electing the representatives to the Global AGM (ICM) should be harmonized.

In addition, National Boards should have the right to propose beneficiaries and partners as members of the Global AGM (ICM). An elected AGM PrepCom should take the final selection of beneficiaries and partners on the basis of transparent, agreed criteria. Again, the ICSD has not yet looked at these criteria in depth. However, we welcome any suggestions on what such criteria could and should be.