

International Programme

Newsletter Summer 2009

CHARITY
COMMISSION



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Introduction from Nigel Tarling, Head of the International Programme

Welcome to this year’s – and my – first edition of the International Programme’s newsletter.

2009 has been a time of a change for the Charity Commission’s International Programme not least because of my arrival as Head of the Programme in March. I joined the programme after heading up statutory funding for WaterAid’s work in West Africa and South Asia, and have twenty years’ experience in government/NGO relations at UK, European and international levels.

I’m very excited about the valuable work the International Programme is doing, and delighted to be working with such an excellent team as we contribute to the development of healthy, accountable and independent NGO sectors worldwide.

You will see from the newsletter, and from updates on our website: www.ngoregnet.org that many of the projects with our government and NGO partners in the Gulf, Middle East, Asia and Africa are coming to fruition, and new initiatives are also beginning. If you would like further information about our work, please visit our website or email us at internationalprogramme@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk

Charity Commission hosts a cross ministerial study visit from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Officials from a variety of ministries responsible for the oversight of NGOs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia spent a week in London in April to learn from the experience of the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

This visit came at the request of the Saudi Government at a time when plans to introduce a new NGO law covering all NGOs (regardless of their field of work), supported by a new unified, independent regulatory body are coming to fruition.

Officials attending the study visit gained an insight into how the Commission works both with charities, and other government agencies to help charities achieve what they do in the most effective way possible. Throughout the week delegates heard from Commission staff on the importance of providing advice and guidance to charities; the approach the regulator takes towards investigations; and how the Commission uses the media to promote the work of charities and its role. Delegates also had the opportunity to discuss self-regulatory measures with Haroun Atallah from Islamic Relief and visited a local charity working in a deprived area of London.

The Charity Commission’s International Programme has been working closely with the Saudi authorities in the field of charity regulation for the past four years, recently helping to build the in-house training capacity of the Ministry of Social Affairs in partnership with INTRAC (International NGO Training and Research Centre).

NGO Sector Assessment Tool to be piloted in Indonesia



In July the International Programme trained Indonesian Officials on how to use its NGO Sector Assessment Tool (NGOSAT). In December's newsletter we reported how successfully the tool had been used in the Philippines last year to assess the situation for the NGO sector there. The findings of this assessment, along with information about how NGOSAT works and why we have developed it, are now available on our website: www.ngoregnet.org.

The International Programme will be implementing the Tool in Indonesia in partnership with local partner, Perkumpulan Skala, and the Indonesian Government over the next twelve months. We hope that implementation of NGOSAT will help build NGO awareness and facilitate government/NGO sector relations in the country.

NGO regulators meet in London to discuss the challenges and tools of modern charity regulation



In May the Charity Commission welcomed representatives from NGO regulators in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland and USA to London for a three day conference. The group discussed a range of topics under the theme 'The challenges and tools of modern charity regulation'. The three days provided an opportunity for both well-established regulators such as the USA and Canada and those with a much shorter history like Northern Ireland to learn from each other and compare the different approach to NGO regulation in different environments. This was the third time this group of regulators has met together; the next meeting will take place in 2010 in Washington DC.

Regulator's Profile: Reviewing the Legal Framework for NGOs in Kenya

The Government of Kenya recognises that NGOs are potent forces for social and economic development. Here at the NGOs Co-ordination Board we have over 6,000 NGOs on our register, available at www.ngobureau.or.ke, but in actual fact there are many more NGOs operating throughout the country which may be formed as trusts, cooperatives, community-based organisations or companies.

The current system in Kenya establishes both a government-based and a sector-based regulator to ensure NGOs are visible and accountable. Registered NGOs have to provide accounts and reports every year to the NGOs Co-ordination Board to demonstrate their accountability. Our aim at the Board is to support and enhance the role of the sector in the improvement of the welfare of the people of Kenya and beyond. We believe that ensuring NGOs are accountable for the money they spend is key to this.

Currently, we are undergoing a review of our legal framework to ensure it meets the needs of NGOs operating in Kenya today. As in many countries, NGOs and civil society organisations develop at a fast pace, and we believe it is important that the Government keeps up with this. We are undertaking this review in partnership with the Charity Commission, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law and the Poverty Eradication Network to make sure the process is consultative and inclusive.

I joined the Board as Executive Director in March. It is an exciting time to be part of the regulatory framework in Kenya and help drive forward the agenda for a modern and enabling regulation.

Ambassador Peter Oloishorua Ole Nkuraiyia, NGOs Co-ordination Board, Kenya



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This newsletter and the associated website www.NGOregnet.org are produced by the Charity Commission's International Programme. The Programme is supporting the development of a healthy, accountable and independent NGO sector worldwide by facilitating the exchange of good ideas for NGO regulation nationally, regionally and internationally.