

International Programme

Newsletter Winter 2010

CHARITY
COMMISSION



“Welcome to our first newsletter of 2010”

Introduction from Nigel Tarling, Head of the International Programme

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2010. The New Year brought more change for the International Programme as we welcomed a new member to our London-based team: Robin MacGregor, our new Manager for the Gulf and Middle East joined us in February. Robin joins us from Dubai where he was Director of the University of Exeter’s Middle East Office for two years, and has over six years’ experience in International Higher Education work across Africa, the Middle East and Asia. I’m delighted to be working alongside Robin as we take forward our projects in the Gulf and Middle East, and I’m sure many of you will have the opportunity to meet him over the next few months as he goes out into the field.

Keep an eye on our website (www.ngoregnet.org) for updates of our work in the Gulf and Middle East as well as in Asia and Africa, or feel free to email us at internationalprogramme@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk if you would like information about our work in a particular country.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of our newsletter, which contains news of our projects as well as initiatives in the field of regulation and NGO governance being led by other organisations. Particular thanks to our colleagues in the Philippines, who provide an update on what steps have been taken following the comprehensive review of their NGO sector and its regulation, which we assisted with in 2008.

National Law University, Delhi and the Charity Commission host a workshop on NGO Governance



Over 30 delegates representing NGOs, the legal profession and donor organisations gathered at the National Law University in Delhi on 10 February for a lively discussion about the future of the regulation of India’s NGO sector.

The purpose of this workshop entitled “Best practices in NGO Governance: Issues and Challenges for India” was to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the current system and explore whether international best practice could be successfully applied in India.

The workshop identified a number of areas where action could improve the effectiveness of NGOs and their regulation, and called for the Government to work with NGOs to develop a solution appropriate to the needs of the sector in India. A full report of the workshop will be published on www.ngoregnet.org

Charity watchdog warning on Haiti appeal scams – regulator warns donors to be vigilant



The Charity Commission, the charity regulator for England and Wales, has published advice for people who want to support those affected by the disaster in Haiti, whether by fundraising or by making a personal donation.

The Commission has been made aware of a number of online scams designed to steal charitable donations as criminals try to take advantage of the public’s generosity in response to the Haiti earthquake. It has said that scams can take the form of fictitious appeal websites, email appeals that falsely use the name of genuine charities, or appeals from fictitious charities. The Commission provides advice for those wishing to give on its website (www.charitycommission.gov.uk). This includes tips such as asking for the name and registered number of the charity or contacting the charity directly if you are unsure whether a fundraiser is legitimate.

Humanitarian Forum launches an online community for civil society across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)



The Humanitarian Forum has recently updated its website and online communications, recreating online what it currently creates in conferences and workshops. Features of the new site include:

- A bespoke resource library with a wide range of downloadable and accessible resources from the Forum and its partner organisations.
- The opportunity for organisations across MENA and worldwide to communicate, share experience, and support each other.
- An online community that can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, anywhere, providing a low cost option for organisations with small budgets.

To find out more, please see the Humanitarian Forum website at: <http://www.humanitarianforum.org/>

Letter from the Philippines – Building on the NPO Sector Review



The Philippines is known in the Asian region as having one of the most vibrant and active non-profit organisation (NPO) sectors. While many studies have been undertaken describing the sector and analysing its strengths and weaknesses, there has been no study analysing the legal framework and institutions covering the sector. At the same time, like all countries, the Philippines is required to undertake a domestic review of its NPO sector to comply with the requirements of [FATF Special Recommendation VIII](#). The review is designed to assess the NPO sector, its laws and regulations and whether there is a vulnerability to abuse for terrorist financing purposes.

In 2007 the Philippines Government asked the Charity Commission for help with a review. The Commission developed the [NGO Sector and Regulation Review Tool](#) for this purpose. The Review Tool was implemented by the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE - NGO), with the advice of a Local Assessment Team made up of government and NGO officials. Implementing the Review Tool built an unprecedented consensus between regulators and the NGO sector on how to improve the oversight of NGOs.

The Review concluded with the publication of a [report](#) in 2008. The report provided comprehensive information on the sector, its laws and regulations and made five key recommendations, agreed by both the Government and the NPO sector. Although the Review Tool is not an official APG (The Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering) document, the World Bank/APG in its [Mutual Evaluation](#) of the Philippines in 2008 recognised the useful contribution the report had made to their assessment and “commended the Philippines for having undertaken such a comprehensive review of its NPO sector”.

Since then, the members of the Local Assessment Team have been working to build on the momentum created by the Review. In July 2009, CODE-NGO and three other members of the Local Assessment Team presented the findings and recommendations to the Social Development Committee Technical Board. The Board is part of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), a central government planning agency tasked with assessing the feasibility of proposed policies and programs related to socio-economic development. They requested that NEDA convene a technical working group to further discuss the issues raised in the report and formulate institutional policy responses. The NEDA Board members sought certain clarifications on the possible roles of government agencies in monitoring the NPO sector, in the allocation of official development assistance and in the development of an information sharing system among NPO regulators. We are hopeful the report will soon be presented to the Social Development Committee, and that it will convene the proposed technical working group.

Sixto Donato Macasaet, Randy Tuano, CODE-NGO Atty. Celia E. Sandejas, Banko Sentral Ng Pilipinas.

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.