



SUBMISSION TO PHASE 1 OF THE STRATEGIC GOALS CONSULTATION

To: Strategy and Evaluation Unit, International Secretariat

The following information is based on initial feedback from AIUK's Board, staff members and activists, drawn from workshops, discussions and individual responses. The purpose is to provide some preliminary input to the Strategic Goals consultation.

As part of the consultation, we asked individuals and groups to consider three questions (based on the questionnaire provided by the IS):

- What are the big picture trends?
- What should Amnesty focus on in 2016-2019?
- What should Amnesty do less in 2016/2019?

These are the global trends and five most recurring themes that came out of our consultation. Please note that these do not necessarily reflect the views or priorities of AIUK's governance bodies.

1. Global trends

1.1 Technological trends

- Technology used as a powerful tool to organise and facilitate activism and political dissent
- Privacy, freedom of expression and freedom of information are increasingly under threat
- The rise of 'individual empowerment' through the use of ICT technologies
- Technology used as a tool of oppression
- Proliferation of lethal or disruptive technology (for e.g. killer robots, drones, cyber-attacks)

1.2 Social trends

- Increasing inequality for LGBTI community (for e.g. in parts of Africa, MENA and Eastern Europe)
- Gender discrimination – gender gaps in education, economic power and political participations are still widespread
- Increased migration
- Growing attacks and restrictions on civil society and freedom expression (criminalisation, funding gaps and legal and administrative barriers) and ongoing challenges of established norms and standards, including those enshrined in the UDHR.
- Rise of religious intolerance

1.3 Political trends

- Growth in power and influence of the BRICS especially China and Russia
- New emerging powers such as Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey
- Pressures to reform institutional powers such as the UN and other international organisations
- Growing disillusionment with traditional political structures and broader ‘establishment’ structures –including potentially established NGOs such as Amnesty International that can be seen as part of the failing ‘establishment’.
- The rise of nationalism and radicalism (both right and left wing)
- Prolonged conflict and instability in the Middle East and parts of Africa.

1.4 Economic trends

- Rising inequality across the world and continued economic uncertainty
- Emerging middle classes in the South
- Increasing influence of ‘big business’ and multinationals
- Workers’ rights at risk

1.5 Environmental trends

- Natural disasters impacting human rights
- Pressures on land use and shortage of resources resulting in surges in poverty, inequality and forced displacement

2. Areas that Amnesty should focus on

2.1 Focus on Amnesty ‘core values’

A significant proportion of our local groups and activists stressed the importance of going back to what it considers ‘core’ Amnesty issues. The areas which individuals identified as core to Amnesty were Freedom of Expression, the death penalty, prisoners of conscience, individuals at risk and human rights defenders, prevention of torture, women’s rights and asylum. Many feel that our campaigning has become too broad and vague while there are still so many significant human right challenges on these issues. Our activists and members feel that Amnesty has the organisational capacity to make a real difference in these areas and provide a unique contribution to the world of human rights. It was also suggested that Amnesty should continue its focus on human rights education. Concerted investment in educational and promotional programmes around basic human rights, both nationally and internationally, would help us respond to the growing apathy towards traditional institutions as well as threats on civil society.

2.2 Climate Change

Climate Change is increasingly becoming a threat to a whole range of human rights: for example,

right to food, water and sanitation, development. Climate change, through activities such as mining and deforestation, can also lead to fragile or volatile contexts impacting on the human rights of often those who are most marginalised within society. Amnesty works on many of these issues but has not clearly identified the ways in which climate change is a factor (as we do with poverty) and a clear policy would help embed the human rights implications of climate change consistently, and where applicable, across our work.

2.3 LGBTI rights

Both staff and activists expressed concern at the growing persecution against the LGBTI community in certain parts of the world. According to the OHCHR, 76 countries currently still maintain laws that discriminate against people on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In many countries LGBTI people continue to face harassment, intolerance and violence. Although Amnesty has a good track record of working on LGBTI issues (for instance through our casework, our campaigning in Uganda and Russia), there is currently a lack of consistent outputs in this area and there is a strong feeling that we would have greater impact if we brought together all of our LGBTI work under one big umbrella campaign.

2.4 Digital security and technology

Governments are increasingly developing more sophisticated ways of surveying mass communications and censoring information. This could have important human right consequences and potentially lead to more forms of protest being criminalised and serious constraints in freedom of expression (for example as seen recently in the case of Edward Snowden, NSA/GCHQ surveillance). While work is currently underway to develop a campaign for 2015, Amnesty does not have any strong research and policies to support any potential campaigning activities. More work will need to be done as this becomes a growing concern in the next four years.

Technology has also become an extraordinary enabler and has allowed for greater access to information, increased collaboration and participation. Given current trends and technological advances, there is good reason to believe that communications and technology will become more widely available and gaps between developed and developing countries will decrease. There will be many opportunities for Amnesty to use technology either by collaborating with other organisations or working directly with right holders and marginalised communities.

2.5 Middle East and North Africa region (MENA)

MENA countries will continue to face complex, political, economic and social challenges. The long-term impact of the Arab Spring remains uncertain and could create further instability in the region. Syria is currently the worst humanitarian crisis in the world and it is highly likely that the deteriorating human rights situation will have a long-term impact in the region and beyond. As well as working on thematic issues, it was felt that we should focus also on country or region specific campaigns, highlighting human right abuses, responding to crises as they emerge and strengthening civil society groups on the ground.

3. What should Amnesty focus less on?

There was a strong feeling coming from our local groups and activists that Amnesty has spread itself too thinly, that we should focus on fewer issues and avoid duplicating the work of other organisations and use our limited resources more effectively. Many cited poverty and human rights as potentially an area that could be de-prioritised. Alternatively, we should seek other ways of supporting that area of work by either working collaboratively with other NGOs or through capacity building. Working on fewer issues would enable Amnesty to respond more rapidly to human rights challenges as they occur and provide sections the flexibility of working on locally relevant issues.