

## **International Issues News # 29 (June 2013): The IEC's vision for AI over the next two years.<sup>1</sup>**

### **Introduction**

It is now only a few weeks until the 2013 International Council Meeting (ICM) takes place in Berlin. This biennial meeting of around 400 AI leaders from around the world is AI's highest decision-making authority and it is traditional for the International Executive Committee (IEC) to offer a strategic overview before the meeting. This year, the IEC is focussing on the need for AI to continue to change in a changing world; on the successes and failures of the movement's Integrated Strategic Plan (for 2010-2016)<sup>2</sup> so far; and on the priorities for the next two years. It also explains how its 10 resolutions to the ICM contribute to its proposed directions for AI.

### **A changing AI in a changed world**

Historically, AI has been slower to change than the world around it. It has spent a lot of time and energy on long-drawn out reviews of its mandate and mission (culminating in adopting the broad mission of working on all aspects of human rights in 2001), but it has done very little to change its heavily London-based organizational structure or its national governance framework. In spite of numerous reviews which have drawn attention to the weaknesses of this approach, AI has hardly addressed these challenges until very recently. The Global Transition Programme (GTP)<sup>3</sup> to move many staff posts and resources out of London to new offices around the world - previously described as "moving closer to the ground" - is a response to them. It builds on the "One Amnesty" agenda that the IEC has brought to the last two ICMs; this has the overall aim of making national AI sections and the International Secretariat (IS) work together in a better, more balanced, way, as well as improving the relationship between AI's local and global work.

At the same time, the current growth strategy is also addressing AI's organizational weaknesses by piloting new forms of presence, most notably in Brazil and India. The IEC believes that the next two years are an important time for the GTP, for the growth strategy, and for on-going governance reform: together they can help to make AI a significantly stronger force in defence of human rights.

### **Implementing the integrated strategic plan and preparing for a new cycle**

Just before the 2001 ICM, the IEC identified four priority areas for the movement - global operations, funding, growth and strategy<sup>4</sup> - as well as responding to the governance challenges of the preceding

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<sup>1</sup> This article is mainly based on *2013 ICM Circular 10: IEC's vision for the next biennium* (ORG 50/005/2013)

<sup>2</sup> See *2009 ICM Circular 45: ISP 2010-2016 as agreed at the ICM 2009* (ORG 52/004/2009)

<sup>3</sup> See *Global Transition Programme Roadmap* (ORG 30/001/2013). The ideas behind the GTP are described in: *Making Amnesty International a truly global movement for human rights: Blueprint for an integrated and results-driven IS, closer to the ground* (ORG 30/011/2011)

<sup>4</sup> See *ICM 2011 Circular 09 An integrated approach to the 2011 ICM* (ORG

months<sup>5</sup>. Today, it can report much significant progress in these areas, as well as some substantial challenges.

At the time of the 2011 ICM, the process of refining the ISP into clear areas of work, the twelve so-called Critical Pathways<sup>6</sup>, had just been completed. They have now become the mainstay of AI's work and planning. At the same time, the GTP has progressed to formal consultations on the development of AI's new hub offices around the world and its implementation is underway. A new strategy and evaluation unit has been established and is strengthening AI's use of key performance indicators for reporting and planning. These changes have not been straightforward: the GTP has created severe tensions both within the IS and across the wider AI movement, especially in late 2012. Furthermore, the Global Management Team (which brings together section directors and IS senior leaders) has not yet delivered its envisaged role and has therefore recently been reorganized. Furthermore, the new assessment system, combined with continuing weak economic performance in countries where AI raises most of its funds, has put strains on several large national sections. Fundraising will therefore be a focal point for the ICM in August.

More positively, there have also been substantial gains in the last two years: the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty by the UN two months ago was a major achievement for human rights in which AI played a crucial part. The creation of new AI presences in Brazil and India is paving the way for the movement to have a much greater global impact, and internally many disparate systems and structures have been harmonized, ranging from uniformity in AI's global brand identity to the use of common financial measures, agreements on shared priorities, and much more strongly coordinated campaigning.

Within the "One Financial Amnesty" agenda, several important financial developments are driving forward growth as part of an overhaul of AI's financial systems since 2009. This has included the implementation of a common accounting year and chart of accounts, a "Big 5" initiative to support fundraising in five of AI's most prominent sections (France, Germany, Italy, Japan, USA), strengthening international fundraising from major donors and foundations, agreeing a new assessment system for section contributions to the international budget, agreeing a fundraising strategy for 2012-15, creating a new Resource Allocation Mechanism (RAM) to distribute funds across AI, and starting work on new fundraising investment guidelines. There has also been substantial investment in AI in the BRICS countries with the intention of creating self-funding sections in several of them in the foreseeable future.

Growth, too, remains a cornerstone for improving AI's impact. The IEC expects AI to have at least five million members by the end of 2015, with more than a quarter living in the global south. It also expects the total annual income of AI to reach €265m, with about 33% of this

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<sup>5</sup> See IEC cover letter interim report of the Independent Review to chairs and directors (ORG 10 020 2011)

<sup>6</sup> Each of these is described in a separate document. e.g.. *International*

being spent through the international budget (and the rest being spent by the sections that raise the money).

Turning to strategy, the movement's starting point must be the current ISP and the five main areas within it which the IEC has pushed most strongly: human rights impact, growth, funding and finance, global transition, and governance reform. In 2015, AI will need to evaluate its successes (or otherwise) in these areas. It should also, in the IEC's view, move away from cyclic strategic plans (which AI has used since the Ljubljana Action Plan of 1995<sup>7</sup>) towards a set of strategic goals that can be refreshed every two years, providing the flexibility that AI needs to respond to international developments. In doing all of this, AI needs to keep the perspective of rights-holders central to its discussions, and it needs to ensure that our special strength - our combination of people power and professional expertise - is used to maximum effect.

Finally, the 2011 ICM called for further fundamental changes to AI's governance, building on the changes agreed at that meeting, to overcome the "systemic failures in management and governance" identified in the Owers report and the recommendations of the Global Governance Taskforce.<sup>8</sup> Many practical steps have already been taken to address these issues, including establishing a governance unit to support the IEC's work. The IEC believes, however, that now is the time for a full statute review so that by 2015 AI will have a new governance framework equipping it to face the challenges of the future.

### **Proposals for the International Council Meeting<sup>9</sup>**

In line with the above analysis, the IEC is submitting 10 resolutions to the ICM, seven dealing with governance, two with organizational matters, and one on finance.<sup>10</sup> Their overarching theme and top priority is the need to strengthen governance in AI. In particular, the IEC is following up the agreements on governance values and governance roles and responsibilities made in 2011 with a substantial set of proposed core standards for all AI entities.<sup>11</sup> The IEC resolutions also cover strengthening reporting and mutual accountability; improving AI's external accountability; and a major statute review. In the IEC's view, such a review will be a vehicle for high-level reform of AI's governance, taking into account all the major changes to AI's systems and structures described earlier. This review will also look at replacing the current strategic plan with a rolling set of strategic goals for the reasons outlined above.

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<sup>7</sup> See *Ljubljana Action Plan for 1996 - 1999* (POL 50/007/95)

<sup>8</sup> See *Final report of the independent review* (ORG 10/026/2011) and *Reviewing AI's Global Governance: Phase 2 - Proposals For Reform* (ORG 10/008/2010).

<sup>9</sup> The full set of resolutions from the IEC and the national sections is in *ICM Circular 6: First batch of resolutions and statute amendments* (ORG 50/001/2013). This was summarised in *International Issues News #27*.

<sup>10</sup> See previous footnote for the full texts of the IEC resolutions.

<sup>11</sup> See *Core Standards* (ORG 82/003/2012). which was summarised in *International Issues*

*International Issues News* is put together to spread updates on AI's international focus to a wider audience worldwide, encouraging more members to become engaged with the issues. The articles are summaries of internal papers which we aim to condense without offering our opinions on the original documents.

We welcome any comments, questions or suggestions on our choice of documents, the accuracy of the summaries, and how the newsletter could be more usefully developed. **Please write to [jinews@aivol.org](mailto:jinews@aivol.org)**

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#### **Note on original documents**

These articles are mainly based on internal AI documents from the Weekly Mailings sent out by the International Secretariat. AI sections vary in their practice with respect to making these available to members. If you are interested in finding the original document please investigate within your own Section but feel free to let us know if you are having problems. We can normally supply English-language versions of all documents referenced in these articles.