



**International Council of Voluntary Agencies
Conseil International des Agences Bénévoles
Consejo Internacional de Organizaciones Voluntarias**

ICVA ANNUAL PLAN 2010

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
ICVA MISSION STATEMENT	2
I. HUMANITARIAN POLICY AND ADVOCACY	3
II. NETWORK TO NETWORK COLLABORATION	5
III. ICVA'S REGIONAL AND COUNTRY LEVEL ENGAGEMENT	7
IV. CHANGE AND LEADERSHIP	9
V. FUTURE HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES	11
VI. ICVA'S INTERNAL ORGANISATION	12
VII. ICVA'S BUDGET 2010	13

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Annual Plan provides an overview of ICVA's priorities and activities in 2010. It builds on the previous work and fits within the framework and objectives as set forth by ICVA's three-year Strategic Plan (2009-2011).

One of the main themes permeating this annual plan is the promotion of, and support to, the role of national and local NGOs in humanitarian response. In fact, the growing importance of local NGOs in humanitarian response has been recognised by emphasising the need for a 'new business model' for the humanitarian community, one that sees these NGOs in a much more prominent role.

ICVA's contribution to the work of local NGOs is by providing them access to the international policy level, either by sharing information on the work of these bodies, or by supporting their direct participation in these international bodies, such as the Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP). Over the course of 2010, work will be developed with the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) and in the context of the GHP on the sharing of good practices in developing partnerships between local NGOs and international agencies, either from a UN or non-governmental background.

Another practical way in which ICVA can provide support in building bridges between international agencies and local NGOs is in the context of NGO liaison and coordination efforts on the ground. This involvement in field coordination will only take place at the request of member agencies in major new emergencies. Following suggestions by several members and with InterAction (ICVA's member and coalition of US-based NGOs), ICVA is setting up an NGO coordination support office in Haiti.

These activities come on top of ICVA's well-established agenda of policy and advocacy work on humanitarian reform, humanitarian principles, refugee protection, and forced displacement issues. Humanitarian leadership – both in terms of the capacity to lead operational responses and providing strategic leadership – and promoting institutional change and innovation, are inter-related themes that ICVA will also continue to cover in its policy and advocacy efforts as well.

Bringing together these various themes and activities, this Annual Plan provides a comprehensive and integrated strategy for addressing a number of perennial issues that must be addressed if the effectiveness of humanitarian action is to be enhanced in a lasting manner.

ICVA Mission Statement

Adopted by the 12th ICVA General Assembly, February 2003

ICVA — An Advocacy Alliance for Humanitarian Action

The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) is a non-profit global association of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that works as a collective body, to promote, and advocate for, human rights and a humanitarian perspective in global debates and responses. The heart of the ICVA mission is to support NGOs to protect and assist people in need, to address the causes of their plight, and to act as a channel for translating patterns and trends into advocacy.

ICVA seeks to strengthen NGOs as part of civil society, through the relationships among member organisations from around the world. It facilitates the sharing and creative use of practical experience and strategies to promote and protect human rights, including those of refugees and displaced peoples, and to provide humanitarian assistance from the perspective of justice and sustainable development. ICVA fosters partnerships among agencies for the sharing and dissemination of information to attain consensus among member agencies on prioritised issues in order to effect change, particularly at the international level.

ICVA advocates vis-à-vis governments and international agencies for a strong NGO role in efforts to secure human rights, prevent conflicts, prepare for disasters, and improve humanitarian responses to distressed populations. Through its cooperative and catalytic nature, it gathers and exchanges information and raises awareness on the most vital matters of humanitarian concern before policy-making bodies.

ICVA has been in existence since 1962. It works to secure the commitment of the world community to address injustice, ensure dignity and rights, and promote international strategies that attend to human needs. Today's NGO members are strengthened in their missions to provide global assistance through the power and persuasion of the ICVA alliance. Tomorrow's members will continue to enrich the network with experience and opinion and will strengthen the impact of this alliance in bringing about a just world.

I. HUMANITARIAN POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Humanitarian policy and advocacy are part of ICVA's core business and our participation in a number of forums and coordination mechanisms is critical to our effective functioning in this area of work. At the same time, however, not every humanitarian issue is a priority for NGOs or, therefore, ICVA. The criteria of relevance, added value, and potential impact will guide us in selecting the humanitarian policy issues on which ICVA focuses. In this respect, humanitarian space, protection, and the state of humanitarian reform will continue to be high on our agenda. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and other inter-agency bodies will continue to be the main mechanisms for ICVA in terms of raising views on behalf of NGOs on these issues. Based on members' feedback, the processes and products of the IASC subsidiary bodies are seen as the most useful and relevant of all the IASC's work.

ICVA's work on the state of the (UN-led) humanitarian reform process will take shape particularly within the work of the NGO consortium of six UK-based member agencies with ICVA. The aim of this project for 2010 is to share good practices of NGO engagement with the clusters and other parts of the humanitarian reform process as launched by the UN in 2005. ICVA's contribution to the project will focus particularly on bringing the experiences of NGOs to the global clusters, IASC, and other forums at the international level.

Another major part of ICVA's policy and advocacy work in 2010 will be devoted to issues of particular relevance to member agencies that are based in developing countries. It has been generally recognised that while the contributions of these NGOs are critical to effective humanitarian action, they are still not able to benefit from international coordination mechanisms and funding channels in the same way as international agencies. The focus of ICVA's annual conference in early February is on the role of local and national NGOs in humanitarian response so as to feed into the Global Humanitarian Platform, which meets the following two days on a similar theme. The dominant theme in ICVA's work, therefore, will be collaboration and partnership between local and national NGOs and international NGOs and organisations for more effective humanitarian action.

While it was initially planned that this third GHP meeting would be the last one, it has been decided to continue the GHP for at least another year. It will keep track of the improvements made in partnerships among the three families of organisations that participate in the GHP (UN agencies and international organisations; the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and NGOs) and will work on what has been called 'a new business model,' i.e. the role of national and local NGOs in responding to, and preventing, humanitarian crises. Many NGOs view the GHP as a valuable forum as it brings together UN and non-UN agencies in a more balanced way than other coordination bodies where the UN dominates.

Refugee protection issues will continue to be another significant aspect of ICVA's policy and advocacy work. 2010 will see preparations for the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 50th anniversary of the Statelessness Convention. ICVA will explore ways to renew its 2001 call for better supervision of the 1951 Refugee Convention. Should members and partners, in particular UNHCR, expect a deeper ICVA involvement in the 60th anniversary of the two conventions in 2011, ICVA will consider developing a separate project proposal. ICVA will continue to distribute the Reach Out training materials on refugee protection to member agencies and partners.

In terms of ICVA's approach to participating in inter-agency humanitarian policy and coordination bodies, ICVA will continue to maintain a certain level of independence that allows it to take a step back and reflect on the added value of the processes and products of these mechanisms. In the past, *Talk Back*, ICVA's newsletter, was one way in which ICVA could provoke (public) debate and challenge the UN-dominated coordination structures. Given the need for an independent voice and interest in reviving *Talk Back*, ICVA is planning to produce one issue in 2010. One idea for this issue might be to focus on the recruitment process of the new UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC).

Activities	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on priority humanitarian policy issues: humanitarian space and principles, protection, humanitarian reform (including clusters, financing, and strengthening of the HC function). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governments, UN agencies, and other international organisations will be well informed of the views and experiences of NGOs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ICVA will invest time and energy in the IASC process, especially in terms of ensuring members' participation in the subsidiary groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The IASC's relevance will be strengthened based on the NGO contributions, and, as a result, it will be more relevant to NGOs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration and partnership with local and national NGOs will be promoted in relevant forums (GHP, IASC, etc.); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engagement of local and national NGOs in planning and coordinating humanitarian response is no longer seen as an option, but a necessity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The annual ICVA conference will provide a platform to discuss collaboration and partnership with local NGOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Conference will provide ICVA, member agencies and partners with an agenda on partnership issues for the rest of 2010 and beyond.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ICVA will engage in the preparations for the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 50th anniversary of the 1961 Statelessness Convention (in 2011) and focus on the strengthening of the supervision of the 1951 Convention; - ICVA will possibly consider developing a specific project proposal to cover these activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervision of the 1951 Convention, as one of its implementation mechanisms, will feature on the agenda of the commemorations in 2011.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ICVA will produce one issue of <i>Talk Back</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The recruitment process of the new ERC will be influenced in a way so that the criteria and appointment process become more transparent and accountable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further explore the option of establishing a presence in New York. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ICVA will be better placed to recognise or identify opportunities for timely advocacy and lobbying in the context of international developments in the humanitarian policy environment.

II. NETWORK TO NETWORK COLLABORATION

One of ICVA's achievements in 2009 has been to bring representatives from NGOs based in developing countries to the IASC and other international forums on a number of occasions. As a matter of principle, ICVA reserves one of the IASC seats allocated to the consortium for an NGO representative from a 'southern' NGO. In preparing for these meetings, these representatives have been asked to prepare their input with colleague NGOs in their country or region and to provide these colleagues with feedback after the meeting. This way, NGOs from developing countries are able to have more access and impact in these forums. External donor funding will be sought to continue this practice, which helps to make humanitarian debates less 'northern' dominated.

ICVA is also closely liaising with other international NGO coordination bodies, including the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) and the US-based coalition InterAction in the context of the IASC, and with networks such as Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP), Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International (HAP), Sphere, and People in Aid. At a minimum, these organisations must coordinate their calendar of meetings and activities; at a maximum their work is mutually reinforcing and they optimise synergies between their different activities.

With ALNAP and People in Aid, ICVA is coordinating work to support the participation of NGO representatives from developing countries in international meetings. It is well understood that multiple requests to these NGO representatives to participate in international meetings can be quite demanding. An effort, therefore, needs to be made to find more representatives from southern NGOs than those presently seen at most international humanitarian meetings. Together with ALNAP, ICVA will also be working on collecting good partnership practices and understanding the benefits of partnerships in achieving better humanitarian outcomes.

In terms of ICVA's collaboration with HAP, the ICVA Secretariat will be involved in the development of a new HAP benchmark on collaboration and coordination as part of their accountability standard. In the context of the Sphere Handbook revision, the ICVA Coordinator will complete his duties as focal point for the issue of protection in 2010. The ICVA Secretariat and a representative from an ICVA member agency will continue to be part of the Sphere Board. ICVA will also encourage members to provide input on the proposed revised text for the new edition of the Sphere Handbook.

Another aspect of ICVA's relationships with other networks is the participation in the Humanitarian Forum that was created by the former President of Islamic Relief in an effort to build bridges between NGOs from the Islamic world and those with a Western origin. In this context, ICVA will focus on the *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief* ("Code of Conduct") and related humanitarian principles, and engage in a dialogue with NGOs from various backgrounds (see further Chapter 3). Worth noting in this respect is also the informal dialogue between faith-based and secular NGOs on the commonalities and differences in their humanitarian work, convened by an American Professor, Michael Barnett, together with the Geneva-based Graduate Institute for International Studies. Following work by the Secretariat, a number of ICVA members have attended a first meeting in Geneva in October 2009. The next dialogue will be held in Switzerland in July 2010.

In October 2009, the ICVA Executive Committee met with the Board of the Brussels-based network VOICE to discuss issues of common concern, such as civilian-military coordination and humanitarian reform and to look at possible joint (advocacy) activities on these issues. The convergence of views and energy in the room raised interest for repeating this meeting in the autumn of 2010 or spring of 2011.

Activities	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to bring NGO representatives from developing countries to international meetings who have consolidated their input and will report to their NGO colleagues in their countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGOs based in developing countries will be better informed and equipped to engage with international coordination mechanisms. Conversely, these meetings and bodies will have the views of these NGOs better represented.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with ALNAP on good partnership practices and develop a better understanding of the benefits of partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ALNAP and ICVA members will have a better sense of what partnership in humanitarian action really means and the benefits such partnerships can bring.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinate meetings and 'southern' NGO representation with colleague NGO networks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Southern' NGOs will be better able to cope with the increased demands on them to participate in international forums.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with Sphere and HAP in the revision of their standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contributing from ICVA's experience on coordination and protection, these issues will be well-reflected in the revised standards.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage with the Humanitarian Forum's network of Islamic NGOs; - Promote ICVA member agencies' involvement in a process of dialogue between faith-based and secular NGOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Faith-based and secular NGOs will be better informed of each other's views and the opportunities for engagement with each other. - ICVA members will have the opportunity to engage in a debate on faith and humanitarianism.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organise the second joint meeting of the ICVA Executive Committee and VOICE Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy and advocacy efforts from ICVA and VOICE will be coordinated and be mutually reinforcing, where possible.

III. ICVA'S REGIONAL AND COUNTRY LEVEL ENGAGEMENT

As a consequence of the (UN-led) humanitarian reform process, NGO coordination at the field level has become more important. For example, NGOs need to appoint representatives who can participate in Humanitarian Country Team meetings. In a number of countries, NGOs have effective mechanisms for NGO liaison and coordination, whereas in other countries these mechanisms do not (yet) exist or are dormant. In 2010, ICVA plans to do a review of various models and mechanisms of in-country NGO coordination mechanisms. This study should help NGOs to obtain a better understanding on what options are available to them when making efforts to organise themselves on the ground. It could also serve as a basis for a further toolkit or checklist for developing or reinforcing NGO coordination structures in emergency settings.

In new emergencies, NGO liaison and coordination is a service on offer from ICVA to operational NGOs when they need it. In 2010, ICVA will develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) that will allow it to rapidly deploy an NGO liaison officer. It maintains a fund to cover the costs of such a deployment for a three-month period, after which NGOs on the ground are expected to establish or mainstream NGO liaison into their structures. The SOPs will cover a range of issues including the development of draft Terms of Reference, the hosting arrangement (as ICVA will not be registered as an NGO at the country level), and relations with Sphere and HAP, which may also consider field deployments.

In terms of providing actual support to NGO coordination mechanisms, ICVA foresees putting in place at least one NGO liaison officer in 2010. This deployment might either be with an existing NGO mechanism that is in need of more capacity or, alternatively, in order to develop a new NGO country-based coordination mechanism.¹

In order to strengthen collaboration of ICVA member agencies at the regional level, ICVA will organise three learning events on the Code of Conduct. These learning events will take the form of a workshop in which field-based NGO representatives will exchange experiences and views and will take place in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. These workshops will be preceded by a design workshop that will seek the participation of member agency representatives who play a role in their agencies with regards to disseminating and promoting humanitarian principles. Links have also been made with ODI's Humanitarian Policy Group, which is about to embark on a two year project to look at the practical application of humanitarian principles in operational settings. ICVA's work on the Code of Conduct and humanitarian principles fits well with ICVA's role in NGO coordination as there is often a need and interest among NGOs to work together on these issues in contexts where the UN's humanitarian response is politicised, due to it being part of an integrated mission or where there are concerns with regards to the relationship with military actors involved in humanitarian action.

¹ At the time of finalisation of this Annual Plan, ICVA is working together with InterAction to set up an NGO coordination support office in Haiti, in the response effort following the devastating January 2010 earthquake. An ICVA staff member will be deployed for four weeks, while she will be replaced in the ICVA Secretariat.

Activities	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A review of NGO coordination mechanisms, leading to the development of a toolkit/checklist for NGO coordination mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational NGOs will be familiar with the various models and experiences of NGO coordination that are available to them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The development of SOPs for rapidly putting in place NGO liaison officers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ICVA will have a systematic process for deciding when or when not it should get involved in supporting NGO coordination.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deploy an NGO liaison officer in at least one situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The work of member agencies, other NGOs, and partners will be supported in terms of providing coordination services in at least one crisis situation (Haiti) in 2010.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold a design workshop and three learning events on the NGO Code of Conduct and humanitarian principles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member agencies and other NGOs will be in a position to better understand and apply the Code and humanitarian principles.

IV. CHANGE AND LEADERSHIP

The notion of leadership has received increased attention from the UN, NGOs, and others involved in humanitarian responses. At the country level, the (UN) Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) plays a central role in providing leadership. ICVA has raised the issue of the need to appoint competent Humanitarian Coordinators (HC) on numerous occasions in the context of the IASC HC Issues Group and in meetings with the Emergency Relief Coordinator and his staff. There is a significant sense of disappointment, however, on the part of NGOs over the minimal progress made in terms of strengthening the HC function. The HC pool contains only a few names of those coming from a non-UN background. None have been effectively deployed so far, while other measures to strengthen the HC function have been found wanting as well. ICVA will continue its advocacy on this pillar of UN humanitarian reform, including pointing to the need for an independent review of what has been done to date. ICVA will also continue to participate in the HC Issues Group. As in 2009, ICVA will ensure that NGO representatives participate in the HC pool interview and assessment panels.

One of the NGO experiences emerging from the humanitarian reform process is that developing cluster leadership capacities is also an issue that deserves priority attention. NGOs have been offered the opportunity to take on the role of co-leaders or co-chairs of a cluster in operational settings. More clarity is needed on what these roles actually entail and NGOs are developing policy guidance to this effect. It is crucial that if NGOs are to take on cluster co-leadership roles, they have to be put in a position to allocate resources in order to develop and strengthen leadership capacity and coordination skills among their senior field-based staff. ICVA will consider its role in promoting or supporting the development of NGO leadership programmes in collaboration with other networks, such as People in Aid and the Emergency Capacity Building project.

Leadership, however, should not be understood as coming from individuals only, nor should it just be focused on operational issues. Leadership on institutional change is equally important. This type of leadership on change in the humanitarian sector is something that could, and in fact should, be expected from a consortium such as ICVA, which has expressed a desire to provide leadership in terms of promoting the role and work of local and national NGOs.

The scenario of the regionalisation of humanitarian response in which African and Asian NGOs will respond to disasters in Africa and Asia respectively, without necessarily the involvement of Western agencies, may well be a reality by the end of the next decade. In this context, ICVA will raise the issue of the increased relevance of these local and national NGOs where possible. As in 2009 with the international conference on humanitarian response in Southeast Asia, organised with MERCY Malaysia, ICVA will look for opportunities where it can engage with other regional members in order to support their work.

Activities	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue policy and advocacy work on the strengthening of the HC function; - Support the participation of an NGO representative on the HC interview and assessment panels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGO views on the HC function are well known and understood by the UN, governments, and HCs. - More non-UN candidates become part of the pool and are appointed as HCs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake policy work on developing a better understanding of the concepts of NGO cluster co-leads/co-facilitators; - Consider a role in supporting the development of NGO leadership programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGOs will be in a better position to assume leadership roles in inter-agency settings. - ICVA will better understand the interests and expectations of members and partners when it comes to ICVA taking on a role in facilitating or promoting the development of NGO leadership programmes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote the role of national and local NGOs with regards to their increased relevance at the regional level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National and local NGOs can expect ICVA to support their role in strengthening work in humanitarian response.

V. FUTURE HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES

With regards to promoting the role of national and local NGOs in humanitarian response, the theme of the third meeting of the Global Humanitarian Platform in early February 2010 is ‘a new business model.’ This new way of working will see local and national NGOs assuming a much more prominent operational role in humanitarian action. In fact, it has been recognised that under the influence of the simultaneous trends of the decline in humanitarian space and the insecurity of humanitarian workers, coupled with more disasters and increased humanitarian needs caused by climate change, further migration, and urbanisation, the role of these NGOs has to increase if the humanitarian response is to be effective.

Collaboration and partnerships with local and national NGOs, as well as relationships with other actors in humanitarian response, such as the military and the business sector, will feature prominently on ICVA’s agenda in 2010. The publications that will come out of the project between the Humanitarian Futures Programme and ICVA on the topic of collaboration within the humanitarian community will be helpful and timely tools that will assist ICVA and the membership in their thinking and dialogue on how to address new humanitarian challenges.

Activities	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publication of the study, guidelines, and matrix on collaboration from the project <i>Gaining the Future: Guidelines for 21st Century Humanitarian Organisations</i>, with the Humanitarian Futures Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An informed debate on collaboration and partnerships that will help the humanitarian sector to better understand future humanitarian challenges and how to possibly address these challenges.

VI. ICVA'S INTERNAL ORGANISATION

It is foreseen that this Annual Plan will be implemented with the current staffing levels of the Secretariat. In case that there is a need for an involvement from ICVA in NGO liaison and coordination, the ICVA Secretariat will look for (a) consultant(s) who can provide support either on the ground or in working with the Secretariat.

Time is a factor in terms of being proactive in setting the humanitarian policy and advocacy agendas. In 2009, ICVA started discussing the option of establishing a presence in New York to ensure more timely engagement with humanitarian policy processes that have moved to this city since the roll-out of the UN humanitarian reform. This option of a New York presence will be further explored in 2010. The possible presence of ICVA in New York will imply recruiting more staff and will have budget implications.

As part of its mandate, the Executive Committee will oversee implementation of this Annual Plan. It will hold two meetings in person, as well as regular interim teleconferences in between these meetings. The Executive Committee may consider co-opting another member in order to ensure a gender balance on the Committee.

In order to ensure its effective functioning, each organisation is in need of processes and tools that strengthen internal cohesion and ensure alignment. As ICVA is no exception to such standard practices, work will be done in the first quarter of 2010 to review, enhance, and streamline internal management procedures, roles, responsibilities, and relationships in the Secretariat. The implementation of the EXCOM's responsibility in providing oversight will also be looked at. Together with the Executive Committee, in particular its Sub-Committee on Finance and Administration, the Secretariat will also review ICVA's Staff Rules and Regulations in 2010.

Activities	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a plan and budget should it be found necessary to establish an ICVA presence in New York. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ICVA will have a solid strategy and allocated resources for opening and maintaining an office in New York.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review, enhance, and streamline internal management procedures, roles, responsibilities, and relationships in the Secretariat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An effectively functioning and sustainable ICVA Secretariat.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review ICVA's Staff Rules and Regulations; - Work with EXCOM on its oversight functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Staff Rules and Regulations document that is valid for the next 5 years; - An effectively functioning EXCOM that is fully aware and capable of discharging its oversight mandate.

VII. ICVA BUDGET 2010

ICVA's 2010 Budget is available for members at www.icva.ch/doc00004244.html

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INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

26-28 avenue Giuseppe-Motta
1202 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel: +41 (0)22 950 9600
Fax: +41 (0)22 950 9609
secretariat@icva.ch
www.icva.ch