Introduction to BWAid Policies on Relief and Development

Baptist World Aid supports relief and sustainable development projects that extend aid and relief to communities irrespective of tribe, caste, gender, age, color, ableness or religion. Specifically, funding support is not only for helping Baptists or Baptist churches who are victims of poverty and disasters, but for helping the hurting communities of which Baptists are one part of. Such support is normally provided by BWAid through projects proposed by BWA member bodies, their churches and regional bodies.

BWAid Policy on Sustainable Development Projects

BWAid puts a high value on the ability and dignity of communities, families and individuals to sustain themselves from their own resources. Good development activities are seen as a process where a community of people work together to break the cycle of poverty and dependence so that their fundamental needs are met and the quality of their lives is enhanced. These development activities seek to address the root causes of the need identified and in doing so, make a contribution to reducing that need in the long term.

The following principles are key to sustainable development activities supported by BWAid:

- **Participation**: The local community should decide what to do, and how to do it, and do as much of the work as possible, rather than the assisting organisation.
- **Just distribution**: Development activities seek to improve the well-being of those in need without favouritism or discrimination by race, religion, age, gender, differently abled people, culture (indigenous or otherwise) or political persuasion i.e. projects seek to bring about positive changes for the benefit of all members of the community.
- **Ongoing Benefits**: Benefits will continue after development assistance has ceased, with the benefits being appropriate and owned by the stakeholders, and supported on an ongoing basis with locally available resources.

BWAid seeks to empower the poor and oppressed to lift themselves out of poverty and deal with emergencies, to the point where they can sustain themselves without outside assistance. Development projects funded by BWAid will seek to improve the conditions of communities in a sustainable way based on working with communities, rather than for or on behalf of communities. Projects will be funded on the basis of their potential to deliver substantial and sustainable benefits for an extended period of time after finance, managerial and technical assistance finishes.

Implicit in such sustainable development projects is the ability of the environment to sustain the activity (i.e. Creation care); the support of local church, local and national governments for the activities; the involvement and commitment of all key stakeholders (including women and children); the ability of the local community to maintain any infrastructure or equipment (e.g. pumps, wells); and realistic assessment of risks outside the control of the partner, such as civil disturbances or natural disasters.
**BWAid Policy on Relief**

Baptist World Aid has always seen the need to provide prompt assistance to people who are victims of natural disasters or calamities caused by people. BWAid has a unique role to play in facilitating a coordinated Baptist response in emergency situations. It seeks to have processes in place to enable an immediate response to such disasters and calamities. While acknowledging the biblical mandate to uphold justice and human dignity, such assistance seeks to meet the immediate needs of victims of disasters and calamities which may also extend to the rehabilitation phase.

BWAid supports relief assistance where it is the provision of basic support to people in emergency situations, such as earthquakes, or chronic disasters such as famine or conflict. In these emergency situations, direct assistance (such as distribution of clothing, food, seeds and tools, temporary housing) form part of a short term relief response.

The relief measures supported by BWAid are usually temporary and are directed at providing life-sustaining assistance or short-term recovery assistance aimed at putting people ‘back on their feet’. Relief is to be provided to groups of people, such as communities, directly affected by a disaster, and will be extended to all people, irrespective of tribe, caste, color, gender, age, ableness or religion.

Baptist World Aid aims to abide by the Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in assessing and funding relief projects in disaster situation, [http://sphereproject.org](http://sphereproject.org) and expects its partners to also seek to do the same.