



**Response on behalf of  
Episcopal Relief & Development and The Episcopal Church  
to the proposed  
Global Anglican Relief & Development Alliance**

**February 28, 2010**

**Methodology for Soliciting Feedback**

In the autumn of 2009, the Anglican Communion Office issued a proposal for a Global Anglican Relief and Development Alliance (GARDA). Episcopal Relief & Development distributed the proposal broadly to its network and throughout The Episcopal Church and used an online questionnaire to solicit feedback.

In addition, Episcopal Relief & Development conducted two focus groups in New York and twelve in-depth interviews with Episcopal Church leaders. We are comfortable that what we learned and are presenting below reflects the viewpoints, broadly speaking, of Episcopal Relief & Development and The Episcopal Church's leaders and constituents.

**Widespread, Strong Agreement with the GARDA Mission and Objectives**

There is broad agreement that GARDA could provide a major advantage in coordinating Anglican relief and development work around the globe. There is a strong, positive consensus on the mission, the five major objectives, what activities are outside the GARDA charter, the criteria for participation and the code of good conduct. There are a few caveats to the above support, which are described below.

**Summary of Major Concerns**

**(explained in detail below)**

- GARDA is doing too much too quickly and risks doing very little not well. A phased approach should be evaluated, with initial efforts devoted primarily to sustainable development and secondarily to relief.
- Prayer and advocacy are important, yet we feel they should be outside the GARDA charter.
- Membership should be open only to proven relief and development groups under the governance of officially recognized Provinces of the Anglican Communion or officially recognized Extra-Provincial Churches.

- The organizational structure needs more thought; it is too bureaucratic and will likely not accomplish the objectives.
- We suggest a separate advocacy group be formed, either as part of existing Anglican Communion Networks or independently, to speak for the Communion on major world issues, working with bishops and including other groups and voices.
- The acronym “GARDA” is problematic.
- Consideration should be given to locating the Secretariat in a place close to the work being done.

### **How to Decide What GARDA Should Do**

The benchmark for where GARDA should focus its work should always go back to a fundamental question: ***What will make the most difference in the life of the poor?*** We should consider a phased approach to GARDA implementation, with the first six years focused primarily on sustainable development, building a technology infrastructure, raising the bar of development expertise and knowledge and building bridges in relationships that facilitate true transformation.

### **GARDA’s Primary Focus on Sustainable Development**

The GARDA proposal states that relief, development, advocacy and prayer are each important and equal legs holding up the platform of Anglican cooperation in fulfilling the Five Marks of Mission. We suggest instead that GARDA concentrate on Mark of Mission #3, “to respond to human need by loving service,” focusing on relief and development, with the emphasis on the latter. Prayer and advocacy are very important, though we suggest that GARDA view them as tools to accomplish relief and development work. The secondary focus can be on coordination of disaster response, as long as it’s held to a finite amount of time, money and attention. It’s very easy for the disaster work to overtake the time, staff, money and other resources that would otherwise be devoted to changing the underlying causes of poverty through long-term development work, which is where true transformation occurs.

### **Building a Technology Infrastructure**

We suggest that GARDA consider a multi-phased approach, with the first six years devoted to creating an electronic infrastructure for communication and for education about the fundamentals of sustainable development; this will raise the bar of development expertise around the Communion on how to:

- Facilitate effective community development, raising up leaders from within the communities
- Implement best practices
- Establish budgeting and planning mechanisms
- Perform monitoring and evaluation for transparency and accountability

There are many technological tools that can be leveraged cost-effectively for broad education to reach more people in more places. GARDA could establish partnerships with organizations that have already created electronic education programs about sustainable development, license those programs and add its own content tailored for the Anglican Communion, based upon the experiences and expertise of the GARDA members. Using technology can shine a light on the excellent work done locally by community partners around the world, while amplifying the many voices that deserve to be heard and recognized as equally important.

## **Regional Meetings of the Assembly Members**

Our Presiding Bishop underlined how vital it is to recognize the variety of gifts and ministries that various organizations can contribute. The relationships and learning that occur when people come together to talk and share experiences are essential for true learning and change. Episcopal Relief & Development's success with regional gatherings led its staff to suggest regional GARDA meetings every 12 to 18 months, in between the global GARDA meetings every three years. This would be a more cost-effective alternative for many groups, for whom a global meeting could be too expensive and too challenging to bridge the language and culture barriers.

## **Required Criteria for Eligibility to join GARDA**

The GARDA proposal grants eligibility to organizations who are involved in relief *or* development *or* prayer *or* advocacy, or those who *intend* to be involved in development, yet are not doing real work.

We believe it is insufficient for organizations to intend to do relief and development work. Instead, any church or other organization desiring GARDA membership must show a track record in relief and/or development and be sponsored for membership in GARDA by its provincial leadership (Primate or Archbishop, as appropriate). It is insufficient for an organization involved exclusively in prayer or advocacy to be a member of GARDA.

Furthermore, as an Anglican Communion-sponsored Alliance, membership in GARDA should be open only to proven relief and development groups under the governance of officially recognized Provinces of the Anglican Communion or officially recognized Extra-Provincial Churches. The criteria for GARDA membership need to be explicit on this point.

## **Organizational Structure**

There is broad concern that the organizational structure of GARDA is too top heavy and bureaucratic. Excessive bureaucracy may inhibit real work being done. The primary goal should be to help coordinate relief and development work around the Communion, at the behest of the receiving Province or Extra-Provincial Church. GARDA should operate like a network, remaining agile and able to respond to the needs of the members. GARDA should avoid excessive reporting requirements to bodies that have no legislative or governance import. Consultation is essential, but the ultimate direction needs to come from the Executive Committee and the members of the Assembly. More thought needs to be given to the organizational structure.

## **The Challenge of Advocacy**

The Anglican Communion needs to strengthen existing Anglican Advocacy Networks rather than add advocacy to the GARDA mandate. The Panel of Episcopal Advocates in GARDA is limited by virtue of being tied to the GARDA structure and by being composed solely of bishops, who are voted upon by primates. The extra layers of bureaucracy are unnecessary and can hinder the accomplishment of substantive work.

We suggest forming an Advocacy Steering Group to design a flexible network focused on coordinating advocacy throughout the Anglican Communion. This group will call upon alternate and expert voices to speak with credibility on important topics, while remaining sensitive to local conditions.

When speaking on behalf of the Communion, a church body, about issues of poverty and human rights, it is important that we have major religious leaders who can speak. Bishops have the moral imprimatur and the authority to speak for the Church in many parts of the world on many issues. Their voices are needed.

Yet if we have an Advocacy Panel made up solely of bishops, with its diversity reflecting the geographical regions of the Anglican Communion, then it is likely to be all male or nearly so. Strengthening existing Advocacy Networks would bring in other voices from Anglican churches, particular constituencies and the NGO community to help understand issues, gain expertise and speak out on issues not well represented amongst the Panel members themselves. One example is calling upon Mothers' Unions to speak about women's empowerment.

Stronger existing networks could work with similar organizations, such as Lutheran World Relief, to strengthen an ecumenical voice to the world. A Steering Committee focused on advocacy separate from GARDA can more thoroughly flesh out how to approach advocacy.

### **Change the Name**

The acronym GARDA sounds a lot like the name of armored trucks in major cities of the world. This does not present the image we wish to embrace. We suggest changing the name to one that is not an acronym and that encourages people to say the word Anglican, thus reinforcing our Anglican identity. Consider a name that ties the focus to poverty solutions.

### **Location of the Secretariat Closer to the People for Whom it Exists**

GARDA should evaluate alternate locations for the Secretariat. Criteria include (i) proximity to a province or working agency of the Anglican Communion doing good work in relief and development, (ii) good travel options, and (iii) good internet and communication infrastructure. A location other than Lambeth or London could give visibility and voice to another region of the Communion.