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ActionAid International - South Africa: Secretary-General

Closing Date: 30 Sep 2019

Starting Date: Negotiable

Reference: AAI-SG

Contract Type 3-year term contract (renewable by agreement)

About ActionAid International

ActionAid International (AAI) is an international organisation working towards a world free from poverty and injustice with over 15 million people in 46 countries. With offices across Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas, AAI empowers people to fight poverty, gender inequality, and injustice. AAI listens to the demands and requirements of those facing discrimination and helps communities take collective action to hold their government accountable while empowering local organisations to lead change and make a long-lasting difference.

About the Role

The Secretary-General (SG) is accountable to the International Board. The SG will have six direct reports, including four directors within the International Leadership Team (ILT), one safeguarding lead and one executive coordinator. The Secretary-General is responsible for leading the ActionAid International federation and managing the Global Secretariat (GS).

Purpose of the Role

The Secretary-General will lead the delivery of ActionAid's global strategy through members, country programmes and the GS, while ensuring the federation remains committed to deep-rooted principles of feminist leadership, internationalisation and human rights-based approach. You will manage the internal governance and relationships within the federation, ensuring a positive collaboration throughout the organisation.

As the new SG, you will continuously adapt the federation to a fast-changing external context, leading cultural change and managing shifting power dynamics. You will ensure the financial health and sustainability of the organisation and represent the federation before different audiences to increase its profile at national and international levels.

Duties and Responsibilities

Building a Strong Federation to Deliver the Strategy:

- Maintain focus on the delivery of the international strategy, through internationalisation, feminist leadership and a human rights-based approach.
- Build internal capacity to relate to, and work with social movements, while also improving the organisation's ability to build local, regional, national and global synergies.
- Manage the unique dynamics of ActionAid's federation, working collaboratively through members and country programmes, rather than exercising power over them, and ensure focus on our single, coherent identity.
- Lead, guide and strengthen the federation leadership team (a representative group of country leaders)

Leading the Global Secretariat:

- Ensure the GS delivers its constitutionally defined mandate in full and within agreed financial parameters, managing prioritisation as appropriate, monitoring performance and ensuring accountability to the International Board.
- Create an inspirational organisation culture and related processes that promote and prioritize feminist leadership.
- Lead the international leadership team to plan and deliver the GS's remit, balancing the multiple requests and demands from federation stakeholders.
- Support the generation and allocation of financial resources, as well as the recruitment, retention and application of human resources to deliver the GS's remit.
- Ensure adequate support to members and country programmes for strengthening core capacity.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to the international board and the General Assembly.
- Support the recruitment of senior leaders across the federation, in line with ActionAid's governance mandates.
- Support the wellbeing of all staff through example and through people-centered HR policies and practices.

External Representation and Profile Raising:

- Build strategic alliances and partnerships with organisations, networks, movements and individuals seeking to achieve justice and an end to poverty.
- Promote ActionAid International's mission among external audiences and convey the distinctive character of ActionAid, as the standard bearer, challenging conventional approaches and the status quo.
- Raise and ensure the growth of ActionAid International's profile in the south and north based on the quality and strength of its work.
- Develop and maintain high-level external relations, including decision-makers and major donors.

Skills and Experience

Strategic and organisational leadership:

- Wholehearted commitment to delivering organisational change and strategic objectives through feminist leadership principles; with demonstrable experience of this approach, and its success, in previous roles.
- Proven ability to affect change working with and through diverse stakeholders, offering collaborative and constructive solutions to the conflicting dynamics of those stakeholders.
- Ability to motivate and inspire staff, volunteers and partners while demonstrating tangible results to end poverty and injustice.
- Financial management and fundraising capacities.
- Proven ability to build and lead high performing and multi-located teams through a commitment to delegation and empowerment, clarity of individual responsibilities and their related areas of personal or collective accountability.
- Ability to articulate, understand, and personify the distinctive character and contribution of ActionAid, inspiring unity and dynamism on that basis.

Representational Skills:

- Ability and presence to represent the organisation to national, regional and international stakeholders.
- Outstanding communication and advocacy skills to influence at the highest political levels and engage with diverse audiences and media.
- International Development / Human rights:
- A deep commitment to and solidarity with those living with injustice and the communities and social movements that support them in their struggle to claim and maintain their rights.
- Good understanding of the structural causes of poverty and injustice with an experience of rights-based programming, solidarity work and campaigning and emergency response.
- Experience within social movements and grassroots activism in the South.
- A good understanding of international institutions concerned with global social and economic equity and related international political developments.

Personal qualities:

- A deep commitment to ActionAid's unique approach and identity, as well as to its core values and underpinning principles.
- A commitment to all aspects of safeguarding and championing the organisational policies linked to this area.
- A commitment to a transparent approach to work, a learning culture, and to the sharing of knowledge, ideas, lessons and contacts with other allies.
- A humble leader, who is able to manage divergent views and influence in complex settings.
- Demonstrated commitment to human and especially women's rights.
- Sensitivity towards gender, ethnic and cultural identities and related dynamics, and a commitment to transform power to the South.
- Sufficient personal resilience to work under sustained pressure.
- Ability to travel up to 30 weeks annually, sometimes at short notice.
- Fluent in English and preferably other international languages.