

ACT Alliance

Advocacy Policy and Procedures

September 2011

Approved by ACT Alliance governing board

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Advocacy is a means to address power inequalities across the world. The fact that more than one billion people live in extreme poverty demonstrates that economic, political and social structures at all levels - from global to local - are not working for poor people. While the rich and powerful over-consume their fair share of global resources, unfair economic systems and financial markets hinder the ability of poor countries to promote appropriate and sustainable development models, and prevent poor people from moving out of poverty to a situation of well being. As well as working against poor countries globally, power imbalances and inequalities within countries lead to marginalisation, political oppression and social exclusion.

This policy builds upon the vision statement of the ACT Alliance, that “United in the common task of all Christians to manifest God’s unconditional love for all people, the ACT Alliance works towards a world community where all God’s creation lives with dignity, justice, peace, and full respect for human rights and creation.”¹

The strategic plan for the ACT Alliance for the period of 2011-2014 establishes “Advocacy for justice” as one of its six strategic aims. The alliance will, in this period, establish foundations for advocacy, support country related advocacy, strengthen humanitarian advocacy, initiate and sustain advocacy on climate change, facilitate joint advocacy work between its members and build ecumenical and strategic alliances.

The purpose of this policy is to give information and guidance to ACT Alliance members and structures, including national and regional ACT forums, advisory groups and communities of practice the secretariat and governance bodies on how advocacy should be conducted within the ACT Alliance. It is a mandatory policy that applies to all ACT advocacy work. The overall objective is to achieve positive change for the people and communities with whom we work and to promote continuous improvement in the quality of ACT’s work.

1.2. Values

1.2.1. Christian faith

ACT advocacy work is grounded in the Christian faith. ACT believes that all persons are created in the image of God and therefore have inherent dignity and worth. ACT believes that the Earth and all it contains are God’s gifts. This calls us as members of the ecumenical family to speak out, and not merely to stand by, as silent witnesses.

Advocacy is grounded in God’s commitment to justice and God’s option for the poor and oppressed. Marginalised communities are at the centre of ecumenical advocacy. The advocacy efforts of the ACT Alliance are an expression of solidarity with and accountability to those whose suffer from the world’s injustices and violence.

1.2.2. Rights-based advocacy

Advocacy is based on the assumption that development is not merely a matter of provision of basic needs, but a process of realising fundamental rights, equity, and of transforming societies to guarantee the human rights of all their members. The denial of civil and political rights, such as human security and

¹ ACT Alliance – Action by churches together – mission statement and by-laws, 2009

political expression, as well as the denial of economic, social and cultural rights, such as the rights to clean water, health care and education, remain prevalent across the world. ACT understands that internationally-recognized human rights seek to protect and preserve such dignity, provide a common universal standard of justice for living and give moral and legal standing to the individual in the international community.

ACT's advocacy follows a rights-based approach, meaning support to people in understanding their rights and obligations as well as in their efforts to hold their local and national authorities accountable, monitoring how governments meet their obligations as well as exposing those who do not comply, and promoting the respect, protection, and fulfilment of human rights.

2. Understanding of advocacy

2.1. Definition

Advocacy is understood to mean strategic set of activities designed to persuade decision-makers to address the root causes of injustice, fulfil human rights and promote the well-being of all.

Through advocacy ACT influences structures, systems and those in positions of power in order to bring about a just, peaceful and sustainable world.

By doing advocacy for justice ACT seeks to leverage the knowledge, experience and relationships of ACT members and communities to promote and advocate for just laws, policies and practices².

2.2. Advocacy methods

The ACT Alliance has a broad understanding of what comprises advocacy. Advocacy connects solid policy analysis with practice and visionary reflection. ACT recognizes the need to advocate both for short term and long term change.

Advocacy includes awareness raising, development and human rights education, policy research and analysis, popular campaigning and public events, lobbying and influencing, media work and production of materials to support these different types of activities. Advocacy will require preparation, including goal setting, power analysis, risk-benefit analysis, target identification and alliance building, and must be supported by an effective communication strategy.

Policy engagement encompasses working with decision makers who have the power to change policy and practice. This area of advocacy is often done with little or no public visibility, and seeks to bring about change by offering detailed analysis, technical expertise and specific solutions. It may be long-term, deal with great complexity, involve "quiet diplomacy" and require personal contacts and flexibility.

High profile campaigning with a large public dimension involves large scale popular mobilization with the aim of demonstrating mass support for the advocacy request or demand for action. It may be directed to exert pressure on decision makers or to try to bring about attitudinal and social change in the public at large.

Awareness raising is part of advocacy when it is seeking to educate and increase understanding on issues of injustice and fair solutions and is initiated with the intention to accomplish immediate or direct change as part of a wider advocacy strategy.

Advocacy methods are used flexibly and as appropriate by ACT members, national and regional forums and ACT globally. Different members put their emphasis at different levels in this continuum of advocacy methods, depending on the political context, the issues to be addressed and the goals to be achieved.

² ACT Strategic Plan 2011 – 2014

ACT members, forums and secretariat must always consider, on a case by case basis, the most appropriate and efficient role to take when doing advocacy. In some cases this may mean acting as a facilitator rather than directly advocating as the ACT Alliance.

3. Guiding principles

Advocacy is a fundamental component in the fight to end poverty. Advocacy is a critical and fully integrated aspect of ACT Alliance work, and all - either ACT members, forums or the global ACT Alliance - should consider inclusion of an advocacy component to their work, omitting the advocacy dimension only in particular circumstances and with good reason.

The following principles guide all ACT Alliance advocacy work:

Guiding principle 1: Advocacy agenda is informed by members' concerns and international debate

The majority of ACT's advocacy work arises from the local, national or regional level as members engaged in development programmes and humanitarian assistance consider the underlying causes of these situations.

Advocacy issues also arise from the global context, and international agendas regarding humanitarian assistance and international development.

At best ACT advocacy succeeds in matching the experience and concerns from the members' practical work in different countries to influence the global policy debate and shape solutions.

Guiding principle 2: Advocacy with the people and not for the people

The ACT Alliance does advocacy with people rather than for people. Marginalised and poor communities are at the centre of advocacy and ACT supports them as much as possible to be their own advocates. Advocacy is understood as an inclusive and participatory activity. People in their communities are the agents of change themselves rather than objects of someone else's work.

ACT advocacy is therefore carried out in ways that are understood by and are accountable and appropriate to communities. Wherever possible, communities are to speak out for their rights and seek redress for injustices perpetrated against them. At the same time they must be able to rely on support and solidarity across the Alliance, particularly in contexts where advocacy is dangerous.

Guiding principle 3: Proactive action for long term change

The ACT Alliance will emphasize engagement in proactive advocacy aiming to counter policies and actions that work against poor people and countries and to promote alternative solutions and policies based on equality and justice. This requires a long term view. However, ACT recognizes that it may also need to advocate in reaction to particular events and circumstances³.

Guiding principle 4: Strategic and mutually reinforcing

ACT bases all its advocacy work on solid background analysis and strategic planning. It clarifies the objectives, sub-objectives, target groups and coalitions, to ensure it chooses the most effective activities to achieve the changes it aims to promote.

ACT must also always consider how to develop advocacy initiatives that are mutually reinforcing, both among forums as well as at local, regional and international levels. As a global alliance ACT must have greater impact than its members or forums working alone.

³ Cf. the criteria for short-term priorities below.

Guiding principle 5: Building a reputation as a credible voice

ACT advocacy contributes to building a credible and professional international reputation for the alliance. The ACT Alliance will build a good reputation through high quality policy research, strong positions developed out of the experience of a global alliance, integrity in promoting its visions, and its ability to get ACT members to engage in the global agenda. Both the profile of ACT and the efficiency of its advocacy work will be enhanced through dialogue with other actors and building strong relationships based on trust and credibility.

All ACT members are responsible for ensuring that ACT establishes and maintains a reputation for truthfulness and integrity in its advocacy work.

4. Compliance with ACT commitments

The ACT Alliance has adopted a series of policies, guidelines and other documents that commit ACT members to principles that also pertain to advocacy. Compliance with these commitments and obligations improves the quality and accountability of advocacy work.

Commitment 1: Risks and benefits are balanced

ACT members should be guided by the Humanitarian Protection Policy of ACT Alliance⁴ which provides principles and minimum standards for protection-related advocacy for ACT members and forums.

As defined in the ACT Protection Policy, any advocacy must be based on a risk-benefit analysis involving field staff and affected communities, as advocacy may involve risks. ACT reviews these risks carefully in order to develop appropriate advocacy strategies and risk management procedures, but balances them with the benefits. Advocacy undertaken by ACT will not force people into greater danger, but ACT also does not consider the presence of any risk as an excuse for inaction or being a 'silent witness'.

Commitment 2: Do no harm

ACT aligns with the principles of the "do no harm" approach⁵, and accordingly, takes into account the internal dynamics of communities and countries. It promotes good practice, such as not creating dependence, supporting resilience and enhancing coping mechanisms of communities. This type of analysis and approach must be reflected in advocacy work as well.

Commitment 3: Support those taking risks

The ACT Staff Safety and Security Principles⁶ provide guidance to members on taking responsibility and holding themselves accountable for ensuring the safety and security of staff. "Staff" includes both national and international employees, including consultants and volunteers who have been contracted to work for an ACT member. These principles also apply to ACT's advocacy work.

In addition to these principles, ACT is committed to support those ACT members (individuals or organizations) who are at risk because of their advocacy activities on behalf of the ACT Alliance. In case of difficulty, the member must inform the secretariat, which has an obligation to follow-up in an appropriate manner.

Finally, on an ACT member or forum request, the secretariat may consider support and action in cases where the communities with which ACT members work are affected negatively by advocacy work.

⁴ ACT Humanitarian Protection Policy, June 2010

⁵ ACT Humanitarian Protection Policy, June 2010

⁶ Staff Safety and Security Principles for the ACT Alliance, February 2011

Commitment 4: Being a learning alliance in advocacy

The ACT Alliance is committed to “leverage the knowledge, experience and relationships of ACT members and communities, in order to promote and advocate for just laws, policies and practices”⁷. It is also aiming to “strengthen the quality, accountability and impact of the work undertaken by ACT members, both individually and collectively”⁸ in its Strategic Plan for 2011-2014.

The ACT Alliance actively promotes capacity building of ACT members and national forums for advocacy as part of the general capacity development work of the ACT Alliance.

The secretariat and members support each other, share experiences and engage in continuous mutual learning and, above all, engage with each other as appropriate at all levels.

Commitment 5: Co-branding

All organisations with full membership of ACT are required to co-brand with the ACT Alliance name and logo.⁹ Therefore, ACT members should apply ACT’s co-branding policy as appropriate to their advocacy work.

When an ACT Alliance member contributes its name and logo to an external campaign or initiative (that complies with the ACT Alliance Code of Good Practice and the ACT Alliance ACT Advocacy Policy and Procedures) the ACT Alliance logo must be present.¹⁰

Although advocacy and communications are closely interlinked, advocacy is not undertaken specifically to raise the visibility of the ACT Alliance.

5. Scope of ACT Alliance advocacy

5.1. From local to global and back

ACT engages in advocacy at times and levels where the greatest impact can be expected on a policy making process.

5.1.1. Local and national level

The vast majority of advocacy is done by ACT members on a local and national level.

The foundations of joint ACT Alliance advocacy work lie in the national forums, which are constituted by ACT members in a country¹¹. ACT members should share and are encouraged to coordinate their advocacy work within the forum, and if a forum doesn’t exist in the country with other ACT members. Normally, the forum should decide to do joint advocacy towards local and national governments and other decision-makers on the basis of an agreed advocacy strategy.

An ACT forum may receive wider support from other regional actors and/or the international level where this can have a positive impact and is requested by the national forum.

It is expected that ACT forums consider and seek the best ways to engage with and contribute to the global advocacy priorities of ACT on the national and local level.

⁷ Strategic Plan 2011-2014, aim 3

⁸ Strategic Plan 2011-2014, aim 4

⁹ Co-branding for the members of the ACT Alliance, January 2010, p. 25

¹⁰ Co-branding for the member of the ACT Alliance, January 2010, p.25

¹¹ ACT Alliance National and Regional Forums Policy and Guidelines, June 2010

5.1.2. Regional

Where advocacy is required at a regional level, national forums can decide to cooperate bilaterally or multilaterally with other national forums, or to cooperate in other ways as appropriate on a regional level. Where a regional ACT forum exists, this would be the venue for coordinating regional advocacy initiatives.

The regional action may receive wider support from the international level where this can have a positive impact and is requested by a regional forum or national forums working together.

It is expected that regional ACT forums and members consider and seek best ways to engage with and contribute to the global advocacy priorities of ACT on the regional level.

5.1.3. Global

The ACT Alliance will utilise its different levels - local, national, regional and global - and speak out with one unified voice at multiple levels in a coordinated and strategically sequenced manner.

As the United Nations is a key forum for many global policies, effective engagement at the UN is a priority for ACT. ACT understands that to obtain its desired result, this advocacy may need to include targeting a number of its constituent parts, i.e. the UN secretariat, the decision making structures (e.g. General Assembly and its Committees, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council), UN specialized agencies and related organisations and member states. To influence global policy processes, much of ACT's work is done addressing national government and regional or other country groupings. ACT engages with the UN and its member states' delegations in New York and Geneva, with strategic links to regional power centres, such as the European Union or the African Union.

5.1.4. Making ACT advocacy greater than the sum of its parts

The most effective results can be achieved when ACT actors at different levels mutually reinforce each others' work on the basis of a joint strategy, messages and continuous coordination.

For ACT advocacy with international dimensions, chains of influence are identified, so that the presence of different ACT actors and partners with access to different key actors at different levels are best utilised to engage in policy dialogue. These actions are closely coordinated, so that, for instance, prior to an international meeting, key actors receive the same messages from various ACT members or bodies. On-going close coordination, including effective information sharing and analysis, is also essential in order to adjust advocacy messages and interventions to policy developments and changing contexts. Division of labour and roles of different ACT actors must be clearly defined.

5.2. Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) in advocacy

5.2.1. Advocacy in emergencies

Advocacy is crucial to any emergency response to amplify people's voices, to ensure that responses are appropriate to people's needs and rights and to ensure that they respect humanitarian principles. It may relate to, for instance, protection, access, promoting good practice of humanitarian and development work, prevention of escalation of violence, conflict transformation and promoting nation/society-building as part of reconstruction and rehabilitation.

5.2.2. Linkage of humanitarian and development advocacy

Humanitarian crises are often rooted in longer term political and social injustices and human rights abuses. ACT's extensive experience in humanitarian work also shows that emergencies may create long-term problems for communities' coping mechanisms and resiliency if the response is not addressed appropriately. For these reasons, ACT should seek to build longer term advocacy work to address the

root causes and related political issues from its immediate emergency-focused advocacy work. ACT advocacy strategies therefore must assess short term and long term factors and link advocacy on crises and emergencies to long-term development advocacy for justice.

6. Criteria for selecting global advocacy priorities

6.1. Long-term issues

Global advocacy takes place in a constantly changing global political context. ACT advocacy reflects this through a selection of long-term proactive advocacy priority issues, whose relevance as a priority is assessed regularly, at least once during each strategic plan period. To maximise its potential impact, ACT should always identify and select emerging issues of global importance, as well as retaining flexibility to take on newly emerging issues.

The ACT Assembly in 2010 agreed that ACT Alliance will work on one to three global priority issues. In order to determine how many and which issues, the saliency of the issue to members, the potential for the alliance to make a difference and its capacity and availability of resources to do the work well need to be assessed.

To identify and take up a priority issue, an in-depth discernment process is utilized, advised by the Advisory Group on Advocacy, working with the secretariat and in consultation with ACT forums, and members. ACT actively seeks out and uses the resources, expertise and experience of its members in this process. There is no requirement for ACT to engage in more than one global priority at any one time.

ACT Alliance uses a set of criteria to identify its global priority issues. They do not all have to be fulfilled in each instance, but rather function as guidelines for assessment. It is expected that any issue would meet many of the criteria:

- Issues identified for global advocacy should affect people all over the world and require coordinated advocacy at the global level
- There should be broad expertise, experience and expressed interest within the alliance, rooted in its development and humanitarian work
- A long-term strategy around the issue can be developed with well-defined and time-bound objectives. Clear and coordinated roles can be assigned and communicated to members, national and regional forums, advisory groups, the secretariat, etc.
- There are political processes in which to engage or other opportunities such as to influence businesses, and there is a realistic chance to build political momentum around the issue
- The issue is within ACT's scope of influence to have an impact and ACT is able to identify clearly the relevant decision-makers at multiple levels
- ACT can bring added value and work in complementary ways to other ecumenical and secular actors and global movements
- ACT can activate interest in the issue among churches and their participation will provide added value to the desired outcome

6.2. Short term issues

The need for short term advocacy on a global level will arise from time to time, mainly in reaction to crisis events, for example, when a political crisis in a given country goes beyond a domestic impact and has an impact on the global level.

A recommendation that ACT Alliance adopt a position on an unforeseen issue can come from:

- one or more national forums in the affected geographic area
- other members who are looking to ACT for their policy positions
- ACT secretariat based on other significant pressure/requests to react.

For time-critical and rapidly evolving issues, the ACT secretariat will agree to adopt an advocacy position and strategy for ACT, based on views of the most closely affected members. It will also decide what, if any, advocacy actions it will take as ACT and/or recommend to members or ecumenical partners to take in their spheres of influence. Where possible, decision making through the normal governance structures will occur in line with ACT policies and framework positions.

7. Cooperation and strategic partners

ACT is committed, as a priority, to develop partnerships with other global ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches (WCC) and The Lutheran World Federation (LWF). To maximise impact it also seeks to collaborate with the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) as well as regional and specialised ecumenical bodies when relevant. Where a memorandum of understanding exists with an ecumenical body, advocacy cooperation follows the guidance of the memorandum.

ACT seeks a complementary role in advocacy, seeking to contribute to and expand the influence civil society can exert. Therefore, advocacy is done in strategic partnerships with civil society networks at national, regional and international levels, whether secular, ecumenical or other faith organisations, in order to have a greater impact and increase effectiveness.

8. Procedures for ACT Alliance advocacy

8.1. Global advocacy priorities

The ACT general assembly gives a general strategic direction to the ACT Alliance.

The ACT governing board adopts the Advocacy Policy and Procedures and the ACT Alliance Strategic Plan with clear objectives for advocacy. The governing board makes a decision on global advocacy priorities on the basis of the criteria set in the Advocacy Policy and Procedures, and it approves a framework position for each global advocacy priority. It receives a report of the general secretary on the implementation of the advocacy strategy. It decides, as part of the approval of annual budgets for ACT Alliance, if an external evaluation of the implementation of global advocacy strategy will be initiated.

The ACT executive committee acts in between meetings of the governing board according to its mandate, which includes “to approve any advocacy position between Governing Board meetings”, if necessary.

The general secretary of the ACT Alliance approves specific advocacy positions for ACT on global advocacy priorities within the framework of the policy. The general secretary is the main spokesperson of the Alliance.

The Advisory Group on Advocacy has a mandate from the governing board to advise the governing board and ACT secretariat on global advocacy. It works closely with the ACT secretariat. It monitors the global policy context and emerging trends and proposes steps of action for the alliance, based on a rolling, long-term and strategic view. It is informed about the advocacy work of the ACT forums and on the implementation of their advocacy strategies.

Other ACT advisory groups may be set up by the governing board with a mandate to advise and support the advocacy work of the ACT Alliance on a global advocacy priority. Such a group, in cooperation with the secretariat, develops an advocacy strategy as well as a framework position for the global priority in question. It coordinates the advocacy work within the ACT membership in the regions on the global priority and takes a role in advocating on the international level on behalf of the alliance. The group continuously monitors the implementation of the advocacy strategy, including the need to adjust planned advocacy work. It reports to the governing board regularly.

The ACT secretariat coordinates a consultative process with the ACT membership to develop an advocacy strategy and a framework position for each global priority issue. It facilitates the work of the relevant advisory groups, when appropriate, takes on a role of an advocate on behalf of ACT. It actively engages with ACT forums to encourage them to incorporate the advocacy strategy into their own activity plans and to be informed of the main debates and events taking place at regional and national levels with regard to the implementation of the advocacy strategy.

ACT forums at a national or regional level have a key role in implementation of ACT advocacy strategies for each global priority issue. Each forum should seriously consider how it can contribute to and participate in the global advocacy strategies of ACT.

Every ACT member should seriously consider how they can contribute to and participate in the global advocacy strategies, with a view to finding ways to incorporate them into their organizational own strategies in the future. ACT members and forums should, to the extent relevant to their context, take individual advocacy initiatives in line with the global advocacy strategy and position.

8.2. Advocacy of ACT members and forums

ACT members are independent, autonomous entities that engage in advocacy in line with their organisational strategies and plans. They must adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, to ACT Advocacy Policy and Procedures and ACT Co-branding Policy.

All ACT members must inform other ACT members in their country and/or the country in which they work, of the themes and countries of their advocacy focus. This should be done through the ACT national (or regional) forum or directly with other members.

Normally ACT members may not speak to governments outside of their own country without the involvement and voice of the ACT members within the country concerned.

Signing on to other civil society organisation (CSO) networks' advocacy initiatives may be done by ACT members, if they are in line with an existing ACT framework position. If the initiative concerns issues for which ACT does not have a framework position, and/or if in doubt of the consistency with ACT policies and positions, the member may request advice on the initiative or individual statement from the ACT secretariat.

ACT national and regional forums are encouraged to make joint country (and regional) analysis and identify possible joint action, including joint advocacy. When an ACT forum agrees to do joint advocacy on an issue, it should prepare an ACT advocacy strategy as well as a framework position for ACT on the issue. It should monitor and review the strategy continuously and revise it accordingly. It may request support from the ACT secretariat.

The chair of the ACT forum should coordinate the advocacy work of the forum and consider designating a spokesperson(s) for public advocacy.

An ACT forum should contact the secretariat if it requests support for international level advocacy, i.e. targeting decision-makers outside the country concerned by the rest of the ACT Alliance (members outside the ACT forum, the secretariat, ecumenical structures with hubs at key international decision-

making platforms). To facilitate the contribution of others, the forum should produce a background paper and key messages, together with the advocacy strategy and framework position.

Any issue addressed by a forum which has international implications, even if a national or local issue, must be coordinated with the secretariat. Before engaging with advocacy activities with international aspects, the ACT forum should request approval of the framework position from the ACT secretariat. On the basis of this position, the forum has a mandate to advocate and take a stance on issues in the short term with the approval of the chair of the forum.

If impossible for the ACT forum members to reach consensus on a position, the forum may attach a disclaimer to its public advocacy related documents:

“The positions stated in this document reflect the opinion of the majority of ACT forum members, but do not necessarily imply agreement by all members.”

National and regional forums may be requested to address issues beyond their national priorities on behalf of ACT Alliance. Forums and members should consider ways to participate in and contribute to those initiatives.

Forums agreeing on the need to build advocacy capacity jointly should engage with advocacy initiatives of the alliance, propose to the ACT secretariat a specific initiative for its advocacy capacity development or seek other ways to engage with capacity development initiatives.

ACT forums may sign-on to other CSO networks’ advocacy initiatives, if they are in line with an existing ACT framework position. If the initiative concerns issues for which ACT does not have a framework position, or if there is doubt about the consistency of the initiative with ACT policies and positions, the forum may request approval of the initiative or individual statement by the ACT general secretary. If needing to consult within the forum, the forum may utilise “a 24 hour rule” (i.e. if there are no objections conveyed to the forum chair or designee within a day, an action is considered approved).

The ACT secretariat approves the framework positions prepared by ACT forums. The approval is done by the ACT Alliance general secretary or - if it is a new or sensitive topic to ACT - by the governing board.

The general secretary must base his/her judgement on the basis of ACT policies and coherence with previous framework positions. The general secretary is responsible for overseeing the conformity of framework positions with ACT’s Founding Document and humanitarian principles.

The ACT secretariat facilitates dialogue with members without a presence in the country, staff of members with expertise about the issue, target groups, and ecumenical or other civil society partners, if requested by the forum.

8.3. Role of the ACT secretariat in ACT advocacy

The ACT secretariat

- ensures that systems are set up and maintained to enable members to share information, policy analysis, grass roots examples and resources on their advocacy work.
- has the responsibility to be aware of all advocacy work being undertaken in the name of ACT and by national and regional forums.
- is informed about and facilitates the setting up of groups to work together on advocacy issues. This particularly involves linking advocacy work done by members in one country or region with that being done by those in another and linking it to the global level.
- provides leadership on implementation of global advocacy issues. There is a special responsibility to ensure leadership and coordination in relation to advocacy with the UN and other multilateral agencies concerning humanitarian policies and aid and development issues.

- coordinates the provision of support to build capacity of the alliance to engage in advocacy work. This includes sharing skills and knowledge and disseminating best practice.
- coordinates a process with the ACT membership to facilitate decisions for advocacy at the global level, and on further priority issues for global advocacy.

The secretariat ensures that advocacy positions held by the ACT Alliance are communicated by the agreed spokesperson in the secretariat or by nominated spokespeople as agreed through the secretariat.

Coordination of communication activities within advocacy is done within the ACT secretariat.

The ACT secretariat is responsible for the overall monitoring and reporting of the implementation of the advocacy objectives of the alliance to the governing board of ACT.