



FEBRUARY 5, 2020

**Statement of Mercy Corps' Board**  
**on Vestry Laight and Nichols Liu Findings and Recommendations**

In October 2019, Mercy Corps and its Board requested that investigative firm Vestry Laight conduct an independent, external review into what steps were taken when reports of sexual abuse by Mercy Corps' late co-founder Ellsworth Culver were brought to the organization's attention in 2018. Mr. Culver's daughter and her husband asked Mercy Corps to assess whether an earlier investigation by the organization in the early 1990s, into abuse dating back to the 1970s and 1980s, would conform to Mercy Corps' current standards for addressing sexual abuse allegations.

The Board has received Vestry Laight's report, which found that Mercy Corps made errors of judgment in our responses in 2018. This included failing to treat a survivor of abuse in accordance with our values. While Vestry Laight concluded that Mercy Corps did not commit any intentional wrongdoing and did not make any effort to cover up the survivor's experience, we are profoundly disappointed with our handling of this matter.

Mercy Corps also engaged law firm Nichols Liu to conduct a separate report evaluating the organization's sexual exploitation and abuse policies and their applicability to these circumstances. Nichols Liu concluded that Mercy Corps' current policies and procedures regarding sexual exploitation and abuse comport with leading-edge requirements, expectations, and best practices of major multilateral and government institutions in the international development sector. However, Nichols Liu also found that Mercy Corps' response in the 1990s did not conform to these standards, and that the organization did not apply these standards in its response to the request made in 2018.

Both the Vestry Laight and Nichols Liu reports are published on the Mercy Corps website. Mercy Corps' Management and Board of Directors unanimously accept the findings and recommendations contained in both reports. We are also now initiating the next phase of our review to determine the extent of Mr. Culver's sexual abuse during his time at Mercy Corps. A full list of the organization's commitments to action is available on the Mercy Corps website.

We apologize unreservedly to Ms. Culver Humphrey for the mistakes that Mercy Corps made in our approach in the 1990s and in 2018 and for the pain this caused. Mercy Corps should have undertaken a more survivor-centered approach.

Being transparent about these assessments and our mistakes will improve our culture, our organization and our ability to serve others. We will turn these lessons into corrective action, and be accountable to providing survivors with the support they need and deserve in accordance with our values and our mission.