

## **Recommendations, suggestions and “lessons learned” for the new Zone Reps and World Subud Council from the outgoing team**

Recognizing that every person involved in the Subud organization, and each new team, is quite different from the ones that went before, we would like to offer the following recommendations, suggestions and “lessons learned” from the outgoing team.

You may chose to adopt them, ignore them, or ask questions for further explanation - this is entirely up to you - but we hope that many may prove useful during your 4-year term.

### **Background**

- The Zone Reps are elected by each Zone Council, assisted by the Helper Dewan, which is made up of Country Chairs and/or Committee Councillors and KCs. As such they are elected as representatives of the members of their Zone. In his 1984 talk to the SBIF trustees, Bapak said: “it’s true that the various trustees are taken from the various zones, but their nature is what Bapak said yesterday, that they are Bapak’s deputies. And Bapak embraces the whole world, in that Bapak considers the interest of Subud worldwide. And that is how the trustees also have to think. So when they join in the trustees meeting, they are no longer there as representatives of their zones, but they are there to consider the universal need of Subud.”
- By contrast the WSA Chair is elected at World Congress in front of all the Countries of the Subud World and selected after testing, by the Delegates of WSA. The WSA Chair provides a “worldwide” perspective.
- Both the WSA Chair and the Zone Reps are Directors of WSA and are liable under the law for the actions of WSA. They are collectively responsible. In meetings of the WSA Board, all the directors, including the WSA chair, have a vote.
- During WSC meetings only the Zone Reps have the right to vote; although we have implemented a policy of inviting the whole WSC members to express their vote after discussion to reach consensus prior to Zone Reps being asked to vote. (See later). The WSA Chair does not have a vote at WSC meetings. The WSC Chair is therefore regarded as a neutral force in discussions, facilitating reaching a consensus.
- During these last four years the Zone Reps have worked well together and have maintained their unity and harmony with frank and sometimes-lively debate. It has been a pleasure being part of the team.
- Sometimes the Zone Reps have had conference calls or meetings without the WSA Chair being included, to discuss Zone issues. Care should be taken by the new team to be mindful of maintaining the unity of feeling between the Zone Reps and WSA Chair. The WSA Chair brings a worldwide overview but should be an equal contributor without dominating proceedings. Since the WSA Chair is also an ex-officio member of MSF and SDIA, he/she also brings this awareness to these meetings.

### **Zone Reps**

- Carefully review the WSA Bylaws, guidelines and job description to help understand your different responsibilities, including as a Director of the WSA.
- The function of Director is a legal one as part of the WSA board. The WSA board was formed as a result of the legal requirement that the WSA be registered internationally as a non-profit association. The WSA is the World Subud Association of all countries in which there are Subud members & which meet WSA’s criteria for membership. This registration took place in Washington in the 1990’s at a time when Subud used US-based legal advisors.
- Legally the WSA is ultimately answerable for the outer actions of Subud internationally to the US State Department, which oversees non-profits/NGOs. U.S. (& international law generally) has raised the standards of required behaviour of non-profit associations (NGOs). Specifically in the areas of anti-terrorism and anti-money laundering legislation. Needless to say there has been a proposal that, given the U.S.government’s orientation in countries where Subud is established, some feel that it is important that World Congress 2014 review the domicile of WSA’ registration at this time.

- Restrict official WSA Board of Director meetings (minimum of one per year, required by the WSA Bylaws) to those requiring a decision on specific legal Board matters. There may be occasions on which the board needs to meet to discuss key issues with legal implications, in which case an extraordinary board meeting can be called as necessary.
- Where the Zone Reps and WSA Chair meet as Directors, the WSA Chair will act as Chair and the WSA Secretary should take the official minutes.
- It is helpful for the Zone Reps to get together with the WSA Chair as early as possible in the term, with the IHs in support, to discuss and test about their respective roles and responsibilities. This important process helps establish an effective working relationship.
- At the beginning of the term the Zone Reps, WSA Chair and WSA Executive Chair discuss and decide on the participation and chairing/facilitation of future meetings, supported by discussion with the IHs and testing as felt to be necessary. This should be reviewed at least each year, with all parties giving a frank assessment of how well the process is working.
- Schedule regular meetings (once a quarter, or as needed) by telephone conference call, Skype or other means. It is important that Zone Reps know what is happening in other Zones; learn about different experiences and ways of working from each other, to help stay connected. Set the agenda ahead of the call, do not have too many topics or the call extend longer than two hours. Select someone to take notes of the decisions made and actions to be taken. Chairing/facilitation and note taking responsibilities may be shared/rotated. IHs should be invited to attend all such meetings & support the process. In doing this they share awareness of key issues affecting the organization.
- Wherever practical/desirable, invite the WSA Executive Chair to participate in the meetings and discussions. The WSA Deputy Chair & WSA Executive Vice Chair may also be invited to attend as needed, given their operational responsibilities.
- Zone Reps are the custodians of policy, while the WSA Executive's responsibility is advice and implementation.
- Both Zone Reps & WSA Chair recognize that working together both have responsibilities connecting with all national organizations, liaison with the WSA Executive, Wings & IHs. The WSA Chair is also ex.officio trustee/director of MSF, SDIA & SICA providing a further bridge to this group. This mutual respect & interaction helps the work of the Zone Reps & Council itself.
- Facilitator to provide an opportunity and encourage everyone to participate. It may be helpful to vary the speaking order for each participant to present their views, with the facilitator going last.
- It can provide a challenge where not all of the Zone Reps speak/understand English. Our procedure (2010 - 2014) on conference calls with Rida (Francophone Africa Zone 6 Rep from RDC) has been to invite a French-speaking member to sit in on the calls and periodically break so this person can contact Rida, then update him on what has been said by the other Zone Reps and obtain his views. In addition, we have held separate conference calls for those Zone Reps who don't speak English (eg in Spanish or French). This isn't perfect, but it works reasonably well!
- Recognize that the Zones (nd Zone Reps) are very different in the number of member countries, cultures, languages, activity/effectiveness of the Zone Councils, etc. Zone 4 for instance has 24 countries, while Zone 5 has only 5-6 countries. Nevertheless Zone Reps are encouraged to report on activities across as many of their countries as possible at quarterly meetings with fellow Zone Reps., the WSA Chair & WSA Executive Chair.
- Old and new Zone Reps to work together during an overlap/handover period. (Length and timing to be determined by respective Zones). Zones 1-2 & 9 appointed new Zone Reps. for 2014-18 in late 2013. The balance of the Zones began their new appointments process from May 2014 onwards up to appointments made during Congress! This presents a range of timelines that may need to be more standardized in future.

- Generally speaking a minimum of three (3) months before Congress may make sense to allow enough time for new Zone Reps to be briefed by their outgoing counterparts. This is especially so if the incoming Zone Reps have limited international experience.

## World Subud Council

- Allocate time before the start of in-person WSC meetings for the Zone Reps and WSA Chair to meet, latihan and share what has been happening in their Zones. During the 2010-14 period there were skype meetings involving various wings, Zone Reps & the WSA Chairs.
- Get together early on and test about the respective roles, responsibilities, strengths & weaknesses of individual Council members and how best to work together. There needs to be respect & full recognition for each other's distinct roles: the Zone Reps represent both their member countries to Council & the Council to their members - not always an easy balance to strike!
- Alongside them the WSA/WSC Chair interconnects all parts of the organization. He/she has three (3) distinct responsibilities (Ibu 2013): supporting the unity of the World Subud Association of all members; visiting & being close to the members; ensuring that the good name of Subud is protected internationally (WSA holds copyright to all Subud material).
- Decision-making process used for WSC meetings to arrive at consensus:
  - (i) Topic or resolution is discussed by whole Council.
  - (ii) Whole Council is asked to indicate by a show of hands, those in favour, those against, those abstaining.
  - (iii) Those against or abstaining are given an opportunity to clearly state their position.
  - (iv) In the event of strong opposition, testing may be used to provide clarification.
  - (v) The Zone Reps (voting members of Council) are asked to formally vote on the topic or resolution and the majority vote prevailed.
- Each Area to provide a verbal report to the rest of the WSC at in-person meetings, combining reports from the Zone Reps, Wings/Affiliates, IHS, for that Area. It has been most effective when all parts of the WSC (WSA chairs, WSA executive, Zone Reps.; IHS; MSF; Wing Chairs) all report verbally to the Council following submission of their respective written reports.
- As much as possible during in-person meetings, divide Council up into smaller working groups to discuss issues and come up with solutions that will then be shared with the whole Council. In 2010-14 we found across (4) WSC meetings that it worked best to schedule short plenaries in the morning & late afternoon, breaking out during the day into working parties to bring back results to the next plenary.
- Although in-person meetings are much easier for effective communication, testing together etc, financial considerations may make an annual meeting impractical. The average cost for 37-39 attendees at Council Meetings from 2010-14 in 4 different international locales was approximately US\$70,000. Consider less frequent, smaller meetings etc. The suggestion (including from Ibu in 2013 & the Council itself) has been that meeting every other year in-person may be more practical & economical. In this situation a briefing involving the Zone Reps and WSA Chair before the in-person meeting is even more important. Bi-annual in-person WSC meetings could be supported by a professionally managed WSC video conference call in the alternate year.

## General

- Having different languages can be a challenge! Don't assume or expect everyone to understand and speak English. Congress 2010 made it clear that plenaries cannot be rushed through, especially if translation can't keep up with the flow of business. We have to pace ourselves so that a balance is struck & there is respect for allowing due process on discussion.
- Telephone conference/Skype calls for more than 6 - 8 people can be a challenge in terms of a finding a convenient time, staying connected, audio quality, number of agenda topics, etc.
- The Council has experimented with both Skype & dial-in conference call services with mixed results. It has been suggested, (but not tried in practice) that Google+ or a higher level (more expensive?) professional

conference call service is more effective for managing conference calls beyond 8-9 persons (WSA Board is 9; Congress Program Team online was 14-15; etc.

- Bapak reminded us (& we concur!) of: “Harmony before Progress”; the comments above made about testing roles & their significance; building trust & respect early on, all contribute to this goal. In 2010-14 the tendency was sometimes to manage as we went along, Largely this worked out, but this process led sometimes to miscommunication.
- With hindsight one can pinpoint situations when misunderstandings occurred. With the right support from each other/IHs etc., once identified these miscommunications can be recognized & harmony restored. So it is best to establish strong, clear roles/inner-outer understanding, communication processes & relationships early on!

As at July 19, 2014