

WSA MEMBERSHIP

NB: Red text = proposed changes to the criteria for WSA membership. Yellow highlights = recommendations from the Organization Working Group.

A. Introduction

This discussion paper provides a summary of some of the issues regarding WSA membership - arising from the following resolution that was passed at the 2010 World Congress in Christchurch.

“The task force on organization should include in its remit certain issues concerning WSA membership, such as the possibility of the WSA having active and inactive and/or voting and non-voting members; the processes and criteria for such categories; and the procedures for countries to cease to be and to be expelled as members of the WSA”.

To take action on this and other similar resolutions, the World Subud Council formed a subcommittee on Organization (Organization Working Group) and national committees were asked to nominate members for an Advisory Group. Advisory Group discussions were facilitated and consulted on this topic. The results, along with input from other Subud members, about WSA Membership are now provided in summary form for discussion at the national level prior to the World Congress in Puebla.

It is hoped that this discussion paper will help country delegates to come to the World Congress, informed on the topic and, after discussions with the members in their country, be able to vote on the recommendations.

B. Background

WSA BYLAWS

The current WSA Bylaws refer to membership as follows:

2.3 Membership: The Members are:

- (a) those national organizations, registered at the Eighth World Subud Congress, which have had their Member Delegations ratify the Constitution and By-laws or;
- (b) those national organizations not registered at the Eighth World Subud Congress but accepted by Congress which ratify the Constitution and By-laws and;
- (c) those national organizations which have not withdrawn voluntarily or which have not been expelled.

2.4 Voluntary Cessation of Membership: Members once having ratified the Constitution and By-laws of the Association, can cease to be Members voluntarily only by a decision of their body of supreme authority.

WORLD SUBUD COUNCIL

At the WSC meeting in August 2012, a working group discussed this topic and developed some criteria and recommendations for WSA membership. The intention was that this should be put to the vote at the 2014 World Congress

The agreed recommendations (with abstentions and disagreements noted) were recorded in the minutes as follows:

1) *The WSA membership form needs to be re-written integrating among others things:*

- A) Benefits and obligations of member countries, meaning: “what does WSA offer to its member countries, what are the responsibilities or obligations of the member countries towards WSA”*
- B) Include a copy of the bylaws, mission statement, as well as the MOU (which includes protection of name, symbol and Bapak and Ibu's written works) and obtain a written acceptance of them.*
- C) Agree to and accept the WSA structure (zones, areas, and national organisations) and adhere to following and participating in that structure*
- D) There must be a minimum of 10 members and an established national organisation (legally incorporated or not) with committee and helper Dewan.*

Against: Mauricio Castillo, Zone 9: Chile and Argentina declined to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) some years ago. The main reason was that Chile and Argentina cannot legally transfer the copyright for the Subud symbol and name to an international organization. Subud is however legally established in these countries. We understand that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) does not constitute a legal document but Chile and Argentina feel that any document they sign needs to be consistent with the countries' laws. Subud Peru has expressed similar feelings to Chile and Argentina.

2) *Financial commitment of a country is a membership fee of * \$US100 per year which the WSA Treasurer or WSA Secretary would automatically remind members that membership fees are due at the beginning of the year. Countries who do not make their payment by 30 June (unless special dispensation is granted) would not have voting rights. (Currently only 36 of the 56 member countries pay anything to WSA). Countries requesting special dispensation are required to send in a request with rationale for their fees to be waived before 30 June.*

Abstention: Robiyan Easty, Zone 4: on the grounds that a fee of US \$100 is too high for some countries. Countries such as Moldova and Lebanon have expressed opposition to increasing the membership fee.

3) *There be two types of membership*

A) *Full membership with voting rights: These would be countries fulfilling A, B, C & D above.*

B) *Associate membership with no voting rights: These would be countries with less than 10 members or that do not fulfill criteria A, B, or C above. The aim being that they work towards becoming a full voting member. These countries would participate in discussions but would not have a vote.*

Against: Mauricio Castillo, Zone 9: did not agree with point 1 and therefore cannot agree with point 3.

Recommendation: That the WSA Executive and the Zone Representatives will work with countries to come to an accepted proposal for a new Membership form for ratification at World Congress.

This new membership form would be re-signed by all countries every 4 years or at World Congresses. If a country no longer fulfils the criteria of a voting member then the WSC, through its Zone Representative, should dialogue with the country before it ceases to be a full voting member country and become an associate member country i.e. non-voting.

The WSA executive created an amended WSA Membership Application Form that reflected these criteria and recommendations (see attached)

ORGANIZATION WORKING GROUP

The Organization Working Group (formerly referred to as the task force on organization) decided that one of the first topics to be discussed by the recently created Organization Advisory Sub Groups would be WSA Membership. These Sub Groups would then advise the Organization Working Group who would produce a position paper for delegates prior to the 2014 World Congress. This is that position paper.

CURRENT CRITERIA FOR WSA MEMBERSHIP (not in the Bylaws)

In January 2014, in preparation for the World Congress, Maxwell Fraval (WSA Executive Chair) wrote to all national committees reminding them:

- **the current criteria for membership of the WSA:**

At least 10 Subud members

Is able to form a National Committee

Minimum requirements are: National Chair, Committee Councillor and 2 Kejiwaan Councillors

Agrees to accept the by-laws and objectives of the WSA

Pays minimum membership fee of USD 1

in addition:

WSA Member countries recognise a shared obligation to protect the copyright of Bapak and Ibu Rahayu's Talks, the Subud symbol and Subud in general in their countries.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), reflecting this shared obligation with WSA, has been agreed and signed by many member countries.

- **members' voting rights:**

Only official delegates from WSA member countries can vote at World Congress. There is one vote per Member country.

Subud members from countries where there is no National Organisation or less than 10 members can observe at (and contribute to) meetings and discussions, but cannot vote.

C. Feedback on the recommended changes to WSA Membership

In addition to the input from the members of the Organization Advisory Sub Groups, there has also been feedback from a number of national committees and individual Subud members.

It is clear that opinions vary on this topic! Some want to see more specific and detailed criteria for WSA membership, while others want them to remain unchanged or be more flexible. This variation was present in the responses from the members of the Advisory Sub Groups, as well as others.

In order to provide national committees with as much information as possible, we have included a variety of these

views on each of the proposals from the WSC working group, together with the recommendation of the Organization Working Group.

1) The WSA membership form needs to be re-written integrating among others things:

A) Benefits and obligations of member countries, meaning: “what does WSA offer to its member countries, what are the responsibilities or obligations of the member countries towards WSA”.

There was general agreement with this recommendation from the WSC working group.

Views included:

- Membership of the WSA should be welcoming, attractive, open and inclusive.
- The benefits of WSA membership need to be clearly stated, so that the member countries understand them.
- The responsibilities of being a WSA member need to be clearly stated, so that the member countries understand them.
- The services and support provided to member countries by the WSA need to be flexible, depending on the laws, culture and size & strength of Subud in the individual country.
- This could lead to greater participation in, and “buy in” for, the organization.

Organization Working Group:

Agrees with the recommendation from the WSC working group and many of the above comments.

B) Include a copy of the bylaws, mission statement, as well as the MOU (which includes protection of name, symbol and Bapak and Ibu's written works) and obtain a written acceptance of them.

There was general agreement with this recommendation from the WSC working group, except acceptance/signing of the MoU, as a condition of membership, because this may not be consistent with the laws in certain countries. (Reference to comments made at the 2012 WSC meeting and noted earlier in this paper)

Other views included:

- The WSA Bylaws should provide a general framework or guidelines, not be too restrictive, and be sufficiently flexible so as to respond to the different needs of the organization and the member countries.
- Specific rules and requirements on the detailed operation of the organization should be incorporated in our internal regulations or “policy & procedure manual”. Therefore, they can be amended, improved and added to without requiring a change to the bylaws. Bylaw changes may run into conflict with the laws of a particular country.

Organization Working Group:

Agrees with the recommendation from the WSC working group, except signing MoU as a condition of membership. Further efforts should be made to address the concerns of those countries presently unwilling to sign the MoU.

C) Agree to and accept the WSA structure (zones, areas, national organisations) and adhere to following and participating in that structure.

There was general agreement with this recommendation from the WSC working group.

Views included:

- The structure and process for member countries to participate in the WSA organization needs to be clear and accepted as a reasonable working arrangement. This should not preclude discussion of changes to the structure and review of its performance.
- We need a minimum structure and member countries need to accept the structure as it exists from time to time, as a way of working, otherwise it becomes impossible to function normally.
- The WSA should be proactive (with the assistance of the Zone Reps), in strengthening the awareness of member countries to the international structure and provide help and encouragement for countries to become participating members.

Organization Working Group:

Agrees with the recommendation from the WSC working group and many of the above comments.

D) There must be a minimum of 10 members and an established national organisation (legally incorporated or not) with committee and helper Dewan.

There were a variety of different opinions about this recommendation from the WSC working group.

Views included:

- Needs to be a minimum national structure (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer & Helper Dewan - at least one male and one female) plus 8 to 10 members.
- The national structure exists to support the kejiwaan.
- Membership requirements need to be flexible. Maybe one person can hold more than one committee position?
- Even with 10 members, it could be difficult for a country to form a national organization with committee and helpers.
- Where a country does not meet the minimum number requirement, the International Helpers should be given the authority to test about the right approach and their receiving should be given weight.
- If numbers fall between the minimum level, WSA and International Helpers should help determine how to make the country stronger.
- More important to strengthen awareness of the organization than to keep countries out of it.
- The laws of the country may prevent having an official organization, This should not stop a country from being a member of the WSA.
- Even if a country has only one Subud member it should have a vote at World Congress and Zone Council meetings.
- Subud is not like other organizations. We are all equal in front of God, so all countries should have equal rights in making common decisions for the organization.
- Individual Subud members cannot be members of WSA - only countries where there is a national organization. (Bapak's talk at Briarcliff in July 1963)
- Where a country does not meet the minimum number requirement, establish a dialogue between the WSA and the country and ask the country how it would like to participate in the WSA?
- Create the perception that WSA is not attempting to impose rules and restrictions on countries where Subud is still very vulnerable.
- Any changes to the requirements for WSA membership should only be applied to new member countries, not existing members (grandfather clause).

Organization Working Group:

Agrees with the recommendation from the WSC working group.

*2) Financial commitment of a country is a membership fee of * \$US100 per year which the WSA Treasurer or WSA Secretary would automatically remind members that membership fees are due at the beginning of the year. Countries who do not make their payment by 30 June (unless special dispensation is granted) would not have voting rights. (Currently only 36 of the 56 member countries pay anything to WSA). Countries requesting special dispensation are required to send in a request with rationale for their fees to be waived before 30 June.*

There was general disagreement with this recommendation from the WSC working group.

Views included:

- The function of the membership fee is not fundraising.
- \$1, \$10, or \$100 per year is symbolic of a member country acknowledging the services and benefits it receives from WSA and agreeing to its responsibilities as a member.
- \$100 or \$1,000 per year is not high for some countries, but will be a hardship for others.
- There is no need or good reason to increase the annual membership fee marginally from \$1 to \$10
- We wouldn't want any country to be refused, or not apply for, membership because the annual membership fee was a hardship.
- Suspend voting rights until a country has paid its annual membership fee. This might occur at the next international meeting in which they wish to participate.
- Introduction of a special dispensation would probably not be requested by many countries. It could be considered discriminating or belittling.
- Could there be a sliding scale, depending on the number of members in the country?
- An increase in the annual membership fee would mean that some countries would not be able to contribute as much to their Zone.
- Encourage countries to test for themselves about how much they can contribute annually to WSA.

Organization Working Group:

Disagrees with the recommendation from the WSC working group and agrees with many of the above comments. It recommends that the annual membership fee of \$1 is maintained.

3) There be two types of membership

- A) Full membership with voting rights: These would be countries fulfilling A, B, C & D above.**
B) Associate membership with no voting rights: These would be countries with less than 10 members or that do not fulfill criteria A, B, or C above. The aim being that they work towards becoming a full voting member. These countries would participate in discussions but would not have a vote.

There were a variety of opinions on this recommendation from the WSC working group.

Views included:

- Countries without the required minimum numbers could be granted associate membership status.
- International Helpers should test about the membership status of countries without the required minimum numbers.
- Countries without the required minimum numbers should retain their full membership status.
- Associate membership could be for countries with as few as 2 members.
- Agree that associate members should be able to participate in discussions, but not vote.
- Associate members should be able to participate and vote.
- Concern that having a voice is not the same as having a vote.
- Each member country, regardless of size, should carry one vote.
- The number of votes carried by a member country will depend on the number of Subud members within that country.
- Some uncertainty as to what associate membership means, requesting more information and clarification.
- Attached is a suggested policy from Lucian Parshall (Subud USA Committee Councillor), as to how full and associate membership in WSA might look.

Organization Working Group:

Agrees with the recommendation from the WSC working group, except the requirement to sign the MoU, as previously noted. The creation of an associate membership would allow countries with less than 10 members to participate in international discussions and express their point of view.

- 4) That the WSA Executive and the Zone Representatives will work with countries to come to an accepted proposal for a new membership form for ratification at World Congress.**
This new membership form would be re-signed by all countries every 4 years or at World Congresses. If a country no longer fulfils the criteria of a voting member then the WSC, through its Zone Representative, should dialogue with the country before it ceases to be a full voting member country and become an associate member country i.e. non-voting.

Views included:

- Expecting a country to re-sign a membership form every 4 years is inexpedient and bureaucratically onerous.
- Re-signing every 4 years is a good way to update WSA records and remind member countries of their commitment.
- Preferable and easier to simply “check” every 4 years that a country wants to continue membership, as well as the status of its membership.

Organization Working Group:

Agrees with the recommendation from the WSC working group, except it is not necessary for a country to re-sign a new membership form every 4 years.

D. What are we asking the WSA Members (National Committees) to do?

Please:

- Review and discuss the recommendations about WSA membership proposed by the World Subud Council working group. Include consideration of the subsequent comments and opinions from others (Organization Advisory Group members and some national committees).
- Come to the World Congress prepared to vote on the following recommendations about WSA membership from the Organization Working Group:

1) The WSA membership form needs to be re-written integrating among others things:

A) Benefits and obligations of member countries, meaning: “what does WSA offer to its member countries, what are the responsibilities or obligations of the member countries towards WSA”.

B) Include a copy of the bylaws, mission statement, as well as the MOU (which includes protection of name, symbol and Bapak and Ibu's written works). Obtain a written acceptance of the bylaws and mission statement. Further efforts should be made to address the concerns of those countries presently unwilling to sign the MOU.

C) Agree to and accept the WSA structure (zones, areas, and national organisations) and adhere to following and participating in that structure.

D) There must be a minimum of 10 members and an established national organisation (legally incorporated or not) with committee and helper Dewan.

2) Financial commitment of a country is a membership fee of \$US1 per year.

3) There be two types of membership

A) Full membership with voting rights: These would be countries fulfilling A, B, C & D above.

B) Associate membership with no voting rights: These would be countries with less than 10 members or that do not fulfill criteria A, B, or C above. The aim being that they work towards becoming a full voting member. These countries would participate in discussions but would not have a vote.

4) If a country no longer fulfils the criteria of a voting member then the WSC, through its Zone Representative, should dialogue with the country before it ceases to be a full voting member country and become an associate member country i.e. non-voting.

- Should these recommended changes regarding WSA membership be reflected in the WSA Bylaws or included as internal regulations in our policies & procedures?
- If you have any questions or comments at this time, please contact one of the undersigned.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this topic.

Kumari Beck
Mauricio Castillo
Maxwell Fraval
Dave Hitchcock

Organization (Coordinating) Working Group

April 14, 2014