Key highlights from the World Scout Committee Meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan (2-4 October 2015)

The World Scout Committee (WSC) met for its 3rd regular meeting for this triennium (2014-2017) in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 2 to 4 October 2015.

Prior to the start of the official business meeting of the WSC (on 2 October), a number of other events and meetings took place:

- The Planning Team of the next World Scout Conference (2017, also in Azerbaijan) held its first meeting, together with the Azerbaijani colleagues. As part of this meeting, a tour of the venues was organised, for which the Planning Team was also joined by WOSM Secretary General, Scott Teare, and other World Scout Bureau (WSB) staff members. The tour was facilitated by the President of the Association of the Scouts of Azerbaijan (ASA), Ilyas Ismayilli.

- On 30 September, Scott and I were honoured to meet with the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev. During this meeting, we discussed about the government providing capacity strengthening support to ASA. This meeting was also attended by the Minister of Youth and Sports who revealed himself as a good advocate for Scouting in Azerbaijan. Later, the same evening, the Minister of Youth and Sports hosted a dinner for key members from the WOSM team to continue our earlier discussions.

- On 1 October, at a press conference, WOSM and ASA signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the hosting of the 41st World Scout Conference and the 13th World Scout Youth Forum in 2017.

- As the Eurasia Scout Committee was holding its meeting in Baku, a joint meeting of both committees (the WSC and the Eurasia Scout Committee) took place on 2 October. It was a very good opportunity to exchange information and provide updates on each other’s work.

The “official” WSC meeting (2-4 October) was attended by WSC Members, Youth Advisors and some WSB staff members. Newly elected Regional Chairperson of Africa Scout Region, Dr Wayne Davis, was welcomed as a new Ex-officio Member of the WSC.

Apart from the business part of the meeting, the programme for the weekend included:

- Meetings of the Work Stream Groups – Innovating Scouting, Reaching Out to All, Strengthening Scouting’s Profile, and Governance & NSO Support -- to review progress

- Trainings on “Time Management”; “Robert’s Rules of Order - Parliamentary Procedures for Meetings”; and the usage of “Skype for Business”

- Seminars on “How the WSC can stay actively engaged and motivated in-between meetings”, “Exploring options for new income sources” (Diversifying Income), and “Improving WOSM’s support to World Scout events”
• Informal and social moments, including a culinary exchange of international delicacies

**Highlights** from the main agenda includes:

• WOSM Secretary General presented WSB’s Biannual Report (for the 1st Semester of 2015) and made a report, taking the WSC through key current issues, challenges and plans, besides the several engagements he had in the Regions and NSOs since the previous WSC meeting.

• A number of other reports from ongoing work were received: the Work Stream Groups, the Youth Advisors, the World Scout Foundation, Standing Committees and Task Forces, and the Messengers of Peace Initiative.

Several **issues** discussed fell in a number of main areas which got a special attention from the WSC:

• Membership - The Meeting discussed membership and census updates, and the need to put in place a standard and effective reporting mechanism to ensure consistent reporting of numbers from NSOs. Also presented was a dashboard for the WSC to follow the efforts being done to take Scouting to countries where it is not yet recognised. Finally, the WSC received the application for WOSM’s membership by Scouts of Aruba and Scouts of Curaçao, and decided to put it for endorsement by NSOs. Membership will be one of the main focus of WSC in the next 2 years.

• Finance – The Meeting was informed that fee collection status has improved (more than 95% collected so far), largely due to the concerted effort of the Regional Chairs and Regional Directors. The WSC approved a number of finance-related documents: Audited Financial Statements 2013/2014, WSB’s Operational Budget for 2015-2016, Financial Best Practices, Volunteer Reimbursement Policy, and a new Fee Collection Policy. The WSC received a report of the final total costs of opening the new WSB Global Support Centre in Kuala Lumpur. The WSC also discussed a plan to develop a Social Funding Platform for World Scouting.

• Events – A report on the recent World Scout Jamboree was presented, and was well-received by all. Dates and details for the 2nd World Scout Educational Congress (18-20 November 2016) were discussed and decisions were made on ways to make this event possible. The Camp Chief of the 15th World Scout Moot, Iceland, made a presentation on the 2017 event, and expressed the need for more aggressive promotion of the event to ensure that there will be good participation. The Meeting also heard presentations on the 41st World Scout Conference & 13th World Scout Youth Forum in Azerbaijan in 2017, and JOTA-JOTI 2015 that will take place on 17 and 18 October. The WSC also approved a plan to celebrate the Cub Scouting Centenary in 2016.

• Strategy & Planning – the WSC endorsed a proposal to adopt a number of (meta) indicators to measure the progress against Vision 2023 and the Strategic Priorities adopted at the last World Scout Conference. Regarding the current Triennial Plan, the WSC endorsed a set of 10 Key Performance Indicators as priorities that will have special focus until the end of the triennium. Finally, the WSC decided to create a special Task Force to assess the impact of the fulfilment of Vision 2023 on the Movement and the Organization (especially due to growing from 40 to 100 million members); as a result, WOSM will be better prepared for the future.
• WSC internal procedures – The WSC members reviewed a summary of an individual self-assessment exercise that was conducted over the last month through an online survey. A plan to conduct a Mid-Term Review of the WSC’s work towards the achievement of the Triennial Plan 2014-2017 was endorsed and will now be put in place. Finally, a document containing Sustainability Guidelines for the operation of the WSC was approved.

Conclusion

It was a packed three days for the WSC. In the midst of good energetic exchange of ideas and views among colleagues, we had the opportunity to see and experience the warm hospitality of the Scouts of Azerbaijan. The excitement and enthusiasm level is high, and I am confident this will hold us in good stead in this 2nd year of the triennium.

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