

CoNGO
MINUTES OF THE 26TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
GENEVA, 1-2-3 MARCH 2018

**“CHALLENGES TODAY AND TOMORROW:
TOWARDS AGENDA 2030: NGOs AND THE UNITED NATIONS TOGETHER”**

2018 being the 70th Anniversary of CoNGO - and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - the Assembly began with a Commemorative Event: a performance on stage by The Theatre of Transformation, under the theme “Shared Human Values to Enact Collective Transformation”. CoNGO expresses deep thanks to Rama Mani and Paul Grant for an enlightening and enchanting performance.

The performance was followed by a Welcome from the CoNGO President, Cyril Ritchie, and the reading of messages from UN and Geneva Officials, and from former CoNGO Presidents. (NB: An almost unprecedented snowfall during the night before the opening prevented many guests from reaching the Assembly site.)

1. Adoption of Agenda.
Adopted.
2. Appointment of organs of the Assembly.
The Credentials Committee and Tellers Committee were appointed.
3. Reports of Officers.
Reports were made by Cyril Ritchie, President, Soon-Young Yoon, First Vice President, and Wolfgang Beiglboeck, Vice President Vienna. After discussion, the Reports were approved by the Assembly and subsequently circulated.
4. Financial Report.
Elizabeth Benham (IFBPW) reported on the broadly satisfactory finances for the period 2014-2017 which had been given a clean audit. Expenditures were kept to the minimum required for efficient functioning. She underlined the need for more member organizations to pay their dues in a timely manner. For the upcoming

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period 2018-2021, this need would be ever greater if CoNGO was to fulfill its potential of service and mobilization of the broad NGO community. After discussion, the report was approved by the Assembly and subsequently circulated.

5. Principal actions during 2014-2017.

Updating reports were made by chairs or rapporteurs of CoNGO Substantive or Regional Committees, outlining in particular the benefits of NGOs networking together, both in increased visibility and in impact on UN Conferences and decision-making processes. The Assembly called on all Committees to enhance their roles and actions vis-à-vis the UN, and to report fully to their members and to CoNGO. The Assembly noted with regret that some Committees were dormant, and urged their reanimation in the coming period. The Assembly received with appreciation a written statement from the Vienna NGO Committee on Sustainable Development, entitled “Urban Development towards Sustainable Cities” (subsequently circulated).

6. Report of the Nominations Committee.

Wolfgang Beiglboeck, Chair of the Nominations Committee presented the end result of the nomination process which had been conducted over the preceding months in conformity with the relevant CoNGO Rules. The final and valid nominations for President and for Board membership were circulated in view of the elections to take place the following day (see item 10).

7. Reports of Assembly Committees.

The Committees appointed under item 2 reported on their work. No issues needed to be brought to the Assembly’s attention.

8. Amendments proposed to CoNGO Rules.

A number of amendments had been circulated in 2017, after discussion in the CoNGO Board (see separate paper). The amendments were given almost unanimous approval by the Assembly, and have been incorporated in the new version of the CoNGO Rules as circulated after March 3, 2018.

9. Principal actions for 2018-2021.

The Assembly laid great weight on CoNGO reinforcing its advocacy role on behalf of the NGO community in regard to the entire United Nations System, defending and seeking expansion of NGO access to and at UN Conferences and Commissions. Regular relations with UN officials at all levels must be further nurtured, with emphasis on NGO participation in the discussions preparing intergovernmental decision-making. Fostering the implementation of the Sustainable

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Development Goals at all levels would be an ever-greater priority. The Assembly noted that the UN 75th Anniversary in 2020 would be a unique opportunity for CoNGO to cooperate with and influence the United Nations System. The Assembly unanimously adopted a Resolution entitled “Funding of Our United Nations” (subsequently circulated).

10. Elections.

President of CoNGO:

There were two candidates. Liberato Bautista received 81.3% of the votes cast. Soon-Young Yoon received 18.7% of the votes cast. Liberato Bautista was declared elected President of CoNGO for the period 2018-2021.

Board of CoNGO:

There were 18 valid candidacies for the statutory 20 seats. The Assembly was asked if it wished to proceed to a paper ballot, and decided overwhelmingly to the contrary. The following 18 organizations were then declared elected CoNGO Board Members for the period 2018-2021: (alphabetical order) Agrenska Foundation; Amman Centre for Human Rights Studies; Dianova International; Federation of American Women’s Clubs Overseas; Fundacion para Estudio e Investigacion de la Mujer; Global Foundation for Democracy and Development; International Alliance of Women; International Humanist and Ethical Union; International Planned Parenthood Federation–South Asia Region; International Union of Psychological Science; Nonviolence International; Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani; Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues; Soka Gakkai International; Soroptimist International; Union of International Associations; Universal Esperanto Association; World Student Christian Federation.

11. Closing Session.

The Assembly expressed its esteem and appreciation to the outgoing President, Cyril Ritchie (2011-2018). The outgoing President paid particular tribute to Elizabeth Benham: “The best Treasurer a President could wish for.” The incoming President, Liberato Bautista (2018-2021) made a closing address entitled “THE POWER of Co: CoNSULTATION, CoLLABORATION, CoOPERATION” (subsequently circulated).

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