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**Report**

**of**



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Secretary General  
WOSM**



**36th  
World Scout  
Conference**

**36e Conférence  
Mondiale  
du Scoutisme**

**H E L L A S 2 0 0 2**

Dear Scout Brothers and Sisters,

## 1. Introduction

This address will not be a traditional one for a World Scout Conference, in which the Secretary General reports on what has happened during the last three years in those areas under his responsibility.

I intend to enlarge the *period* to be covered as well as the *scope* of this report and to look at the *changes in World Scouting* which have taken place since we took our first steps towards a World Strategy in Melbourne, 14 years ago. I shall simultaneously try and identify our challenges *towards 2007 and beyond* in a world that is more *globalized* than ever before. I shall proceed in this manner because it seems important to me that, as we are hopefully going to adopt a Strategy for a new generation, we should remember from where we all come, in order to decide where we should all go, in a historical, long-term perspective. I also do so aware that there are, in this room, Scouters for whom it is their first World Conference and others who have attended two, three or more, and I would wish all of you to have a similar level of information at the beginning of this important gathering. Finally I present this report keenly conscious that there is an uninterrupted link between each Scout in the world and our Founder, Baden-Powell: like a tree, our roots all go back to him, but our branches reach up to the skies. We cannot grow without these roots; but we have no meaning if we do not grow.

A last introductory remark: I shall of course stick to the 20 minutes given to me for this report. However, I wish you to know that the written report that will be distributed will be more complete. You will also find that text on our website.

## 2. Scouting and the world around it

The world around us has changed a lot since Melbourne. But so have we, at least in our relationship to it, as a worldwide Movement and Organization. Let me give you some examples.

### 2.1. A multicultural Movement

Fourteen years ago, this Conference used interpretation in two languages only: French and English. Today we use *five languages for simultaneous interpretation*. Unfortunately, our official languages are still only English and French. We should find the financial means to have Spanish, Arabic and Russian become official languages for WOSM. For it is “only” a question of means. Meanwhile our Regional offices in Cairo, Santiago and Yalta do translate, at the cost of a considerable effort, all our official WOSM documents into Arabic, Spanish and Russian.

### 2.2. Permanent collaboration with others

Fourteen years ago, this Conference was not attended by any non-Scout guests, except for WAGGGS. *Today, we welcome many other non-Scout entities with which we work*. In fact our working relationship with NGOs and IGOs has tremendously developed in all areas and at all levels: national, regional and international. For instance, at the world level, the *Global Development Village* (GDV) for the forthcoming World Jamboree in Thailand involves a dozen specialised UN Agencies and as many international NGOs which will participate in the Village. The GDV has become the active symbol of the involvement of Scouting into *all* aspects of *civil society* linked to *humanitarian* or *development* issues.

- Let me quote the names of a few of these organizations with which we are trying to build a better world. The first are of course the members of **The Alliance of Youth CEOs** with

whom we have been developing common policies on “*non-formal education*”, on “*National Youth Policies*” and on “*Girls and Young Women*”, and with whom we are going to work together on a major coordinated effort to fight *HIV/AIDS in Africa*. I speak of:

WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts)

YMCA (World Alliance of Young Men’s Christian Association)

YWCA (World Young Women’s Christian Association)

IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies)

IAA (International Award Association)

IYF (International Youth Foundation)

What we need to do with this group of organizations is to duplicate *at the national level* the kind of relationships which we have at the world level. In other words we, CEOs, must have our national associations participate in *national Alliances* with the same organizations as we do at the *international* level. This approach has not yet caught on as it should, for most National Scout Organizations are still too shy in extending at home the hand of collaboration to these other movements.

- But there is not only the Global Development Village and the Alliance of Youth CEOs. There are *dozens of other NGOs and IGOs* with which we work at world or regional levels, having even permanent representatives with some of them such as those Scout volunteers representing WOSM at the United Nations in New York, Geneva, Paris, Vienna and Rome.

Our direction for the future is to have more working relationships at *regional* level with such partners. Some of our Regional Committees and especially offices do have intense collaboration, but not all ... and *all should have it*.

- Relationships with *national government authorities* have also increased, yet without Scouting losing its independence for all that. For instance the **World Scout Parliamentary Union** counts today representatives of more than 80 countries who have attended three General Assemblies in 10 years; the next WSPU General Assembly will be in Cairo from October 25th to 29th, 2003. Here it is also at the *national* level that most of our Scout Organizations have not yet realised the “mileage” which they can get for Scouting *at home* from a regular rapport with “Scout Parliamentarians” from their own country.

- Our work with UNESCO on the Decade for a Culture of Peace has been very beneficial, as you will soon see in our new publication on this subject. It contains many practical activities to use in your own country.

- Our work with a diverse group of religions has resulted in a seminal publication on Scouting and Spiritual Development, which has been very well received.

- Another example is our growing relationship with members of Rotary who support Scouting. I addressed their large International Conference in Barcelona only 3 weeks ago, and I hope it won’t be long before we announce a joint project towards 2007.

## 3. Changes within the Scouting world

It is not only the relationships between the Scout and non-Scout world which have changed in these 14 years. The international dimension of Scouting *within WOSM* has also evolved considerably since Melbourne. Here again, let me take you through a quick look at these changes.

- Mainly thanks to the fall of the Iron Curtain, we have gained **37 new member countries** since the Melbourne Conference and we have created a sixth WOSM Region: *Eurasia*. It is interesting to note that, after WOSM was founded in 1922 with 30 countries, it took 37 years before 37 additional countries became members!

- We have seen, at long last, **women** and **younger leaders** play a greater role in our Movement, also at all levels. But this progress has been too slow. Only a strong proactive approach will give to women and younger people a stronger and more equitable share of responsibility and will get us where we need to go. Yes, we have made progress and this should not be ignored; but, in the future, progress should be faster in these two areas. Here again, the Strategy which is being proposed to you for adoption strongly emphasises both these key areas, each of which is the subject of a specific strategic priority.

- During that period we have also substantially increased *the number of adult volunteers* who give their time to Regional and/or World Scouting. A recent study made at world level with the support of the Asia-Pacific Region and distributed here, identifies more than 500 adult volunteers in 105 countries who are at present playing a role at regional and/or world level. This represents an incredibly valuable resource and network for a Movement like ours. It is a great demonstration of the importance which our members give to the international dimension of our Movement.

- Fourteen years ago we were 16 million members. Today we are close to 30 million, with a marked increase in the Asia-Pacific Region, as well as in school-based Scouting.

- But there is a negative side behind this figure: the *decrease in membership in industrialised countries*, especially of Europe. *This is one of the biggest challenges which we have to meet in the coming years.* There is not one single way to meet that challenge, but at the heart of the issue is what we have called - at the Paris Conference - "the duty to grow". Having had the privilege of being a Scout creates a *duty* for each of us to try and share that privilege with the greatest possible number of young people. This drive must be based on the conviction that we truly have, as Scouters, a *duty* to "make the world a better place than we have found it" as Baden-Powell said in his last message. Each of us is a member of a global Movement with a world-wide responsibility; that responsibility is the mission not only of each Scout, young or adult, but also of the entire Organization. And here, we still have a long way to go: this "missionary" feeling is not yet shared as it should be at the local level, at the group, troop and patrol levels. Yet, this is where Scouting happens; this is where our educational method, values, leadership, organizational support, find their "raison d'être". If we do not reach the field level with our vision, our mission and our strategy, then we are like the archer who misses the target: he, his bow and his arrow lose all their meaning. Only when the arrow touches the target, only when the young Scout is reached, do we - all of us in this room and all other adult Scouters around the world - actually "make sense" and justify our existence as an Organization. Having said that, I am confident that the Strategy which is being proposed to you for adoption at this Conference will enable us to make great strides in this essential area.

#### 4. The educational dimension within World Scouting

- During these 14 years of working *towards* a Strategy for World Scouting, the World Scout Conference, the World Scout Committee and the World Scout Bureau have taken *major steps towards improving the educational quality of Scouting*. We

have adopted several major world policies including, in particular, the *World Programme Policy*, the *World Adult Resources Policy*, the *Policy on Participation of Young People in Decision-making*, the *Policy on Girls and Boys, Women and Men in Scouting*. Most of these policies have been supported by tools to help Associations in their implementation which has resulted in great progress in many of the sectors concerned.

- In this educational realm, the **Strategy** which we hope to adopt here in Thessaloniki should give us the blueprint to follow in order to continue improving the educational quality of Scouting. The Strategy proposed, which builds on the results of the past 14 years, is tailor-made to enable us to achieve our educational mission, on the basis of a shared vision of Scouting for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It differs from the previous approach in at least one main respect: it cuts across all sectors of our work - youth programme, adult resources, management, etc., rather than dealing with each sector separately. Through a broader interdisciplinary approach in the formulation of the priorities, the Strategy aims at responding directly to the key challenges identified in Durban as being those facing the achievement of our mission. It is designed to help associations to meet these challenges, and to enable the world and regional bodies to produce the tools to support associations in the process. As was the case for the adoption of the mission in Durban, I believe that the adoption of the Strategy in Thessaloniki will be a milestone in the history of Scouting and a major instrument for the growth and development of our Movement at the service of the community.

#### 5. Finances, management and communication

- It is worth stressing that all of this has been achieved at *little extra cost in financial terms*. Throughout these 14 years the World Scout Bureau has kept the same level of staff, and the world fees have stayed the same in relative value, being only adapted to inflation and with a more equitable fee system since the Oslo Conference in 1996. Today, *the average yearly individual world fee is about 10 US cents per Scout*, which is - let's face it - more than reasonable.

- In fact the only source of truly increased income has been the **World Scout Foundation**, which has been doing a fantastic (and, indeed, sometimes "WOSM saving") job, increasing its yearly grant to the World Scout Bureau from CHF 1.1 million to 2.1 million during that period, an increase that has mostly gone in larger yearly grants to the Regions, since the Geneva headquarters - for its part - has *stayed at the same budgetary level* in relative value since 1988.

This said, the stock market being what it has been in the last two years, the world level is certainly going to face difficult years in the period to come and the basic lack of means of the World Committee and Bureau still remains a problem.

- Despite these limits, we have considerably improved our communication system, mainly thanks to the Internet, and our website now has 1,800 visitors per day. But in this area, as the McKinsey Report has shown, we still have progress to make, even within our limited means. In fact, our basic management challenge has not changed in these 14 years: we have been able to do more and better with the same amounts and, unless other funds can be found, we shall still have to do more and better with the same amount! From that point of view, the McKinsey study has been particularly useful, bringing the best out of us and giving us concrete ideas on how to do "more and better" with the same limited means, while opening avenues for possible increased means in the future.

## 6. A global responsibility in a globalized world

I do want to add here a word about the “global” responsibility of Scouting in a “globalized” world.

“Globalization” is a much used word today. “Amazon dot com” gives more than 800 titles using the word! But it is an ill-defined concept. This is no doubt one of the reasons why some criticise it, while others appraise it. Yet, even without agreeing on a definition, there is a general feeling that globalization is “something happening to our world,” and that it has its good and its bad sides. The main characteristic of this trend is that national borders and government authority have great difficulties in controlling the transnational flows of *information* and *entertainment*, of *capital*, and *people* and of such *plagues* as *drugs*, *weapons*, *diseases* and *toxic waste*. What happens at one side of the world has consequences on the other side in quicker and stronger ways than ever. Good and bad consequences.

What individual members of *any* global movement like Scouting should see is the fact that *belonging to a worldwide movement in a globalized world creates a global responsibility for each of us as well as for the movement*. For we have, through Scouting, the means not only to *become aware* of problems much bigger than any of us, but also to *do something* about these problems, either through Scouting or otherwise. Because *Scouting is education and education conditions everything*, we can increase the *awareness* which our individual members have of the global problems of our common world ... and we can also motivate them to *act*. For we are first and foremost an *action-oriented* Movement, and we must, through that global approach, influence the *actions* of our members at whichever level they find themselves, actions by which they will bring their own personal contribution (modest or important) towards solving the common problems of our global village. Baden-Powell said, in the Scout leader’s handbook: “*No man can be called educated who has not a willingness and a desire, as well as a trained ability, to do his part in the world’s work*”. “**To do his part in the world’s work**”! What a visionary man! The word is not “globalization” ... but the concept is there!

Such a youth programme as “Scouts of the World” for instance - which brings together action for environment, sustainable development and peace - is a perfect example of how Scouts can concretely contribute to “humanising globalization” and I encourage you to fully invest your NSOs in this “Scouts of the World” programme as soon as you will get it in its final form in early 2003. (Meanwhile, a draft is already on the Internet and we expect your comments and proposals.)

It is particularly in our relationship with *less favoured countries* that we must think and act globally. A Movement as strong as Scouting cannot ignore the challenges of our common world like extreme poverty, malnutrition or diseases, especially HIV/AIDS. In an environment of globalized competition, the underprivileged remain caught in the “poverty trap” due to the *lack of knowledge and experience* which are the conditions of success in our days. Scouting can and must bring its own contribution to bridging this divide which is not only a North/South divide, but also a divide within single countries.

In the *cultural field* Scouting has also a unique role to play. With its almost 100-year track record as a global Movement of non-formal education, Scouting has an unparalleled experience as a common platform to overcome cultural conflicts. Through Scouting, young men and women gain unforgettable experiences in a multicultural environment. From such encounters with other people, Scouts learn tolerance and

cooperation with others across cultural differences. Such experiences are key-success factors in a globalized world.

In short, Scouting has the tools and the knowledge to make a substantial contribution to bridging the manifold divides of our world today. It is our duty to share these strengths of our Movement with those who need them most, in an act of *global solidarity* both within the Movement as well as with non-Scouts.

Let us also remember that beyond what we can do within and through Scouting in order to “humanise globalization”, there are things which we can do to bring *others* along similar paths. Scouting can and must be a *role model in civil society*, this growing “third power” between government and business. Civil society is an ectoplasmic magma ... and that is both its strength and its weakness. It has no borders and little structure. It is a network of networks with varying - indeed opposing - trends, which is only defined by what it is not: *neither government, nor business*. But it is a very fertile middle ground which can be strongly influenced by those in civil society who have clear options and clear ideas ... which is the case for Scouting. And, just as education is behind all elements of civil society, so can Scouting influence the orientations of civil society. Civil society in general - not only Scouting - *needs the values of Scouting*. For civil society is built on individuals and it needs its prime actors to be *responsible, committed, autonomous* and *supportive* ... which is precisely the kind of people which Scouting both attracts and develops. Bottom line: *both as individuals and as a Movement we must increase the self-awareness of our global responsibility in a global world and anchor these notions in our long-term Strategy*.

But here we are faced with a problem that I have mentioned time and again over these past years: our Movement is too modest as a Movement! Because we have been taught and brought up, as Scouts, to be individually modest (something at which each of us succeeds to different degrees!), we tend to be also modest for the Movement. On the contrary: we should be as ambitious for the Movement as we are supposed to be modest for ourselves! We should remember how ambitious our Founder was for World Scouting. So much so that he considered the outbreak of World War II as a defeat for World Scouting ... which, with historical hindsight, does look *very ambitious*!

One of the privileges of my position is to witness how much *others* expect of Scouting. Time and again, Ministers, Heads of States, speak to me about their expectations from Scouting as a *key actor* towards a *more tolerant, more peaceful, more just world*. They are often more ambitious for us than we ourselves are. This should bring us to take another look at ourselves, to see us with the eyes of others and to see if, *as a Movement* - not only as individuals, we can do more to “humanise globalization”. *It is not so much a matter of doing something else, than of doing the things we do with a greater awareness of our contribution to the common goals for humanity*.

This is important not only for ourselves and for the world around us. It is also important to provide us with *the means of our policies*. When we raise funds for Scouting, we are much stronger in our persuasion of non-Scouts if we can show them that we can really “make a difference” in the world. Show the businessmen, show the governments that we are not asking money for ourselves but, indeed, that we are making “the world a better place”. Show them that we are ambitiously willing and able to do so; that we have a “track record” of “delivering” on that promise. And they will see that investing in Scouting is truly investing in a better future.

## **7. Our challenges for the future**

In this report I have been consciously looking both in the rear-view mirror and at the road which is ahead of us. Before I conclude with the key points which I see for the future, let me say how grateful I am and how privileged I feel to have been part of this process since Melbourne, for I have received much more than I may have given.

As to our challenges for the future, our draft Strategy clearly indicates what they are and the ways to meet them towards our Centenary in 2007 and even beyond. For our Movement, for our Organization, as well as for the World Committee and Bureau, I see mainly the six following challenges:

- to identify the causes for the drop in membership in industrialised countries and to reverse the trend, particularly for adolescents,
- to reach out to the less favoured individuals, groups, countries and continents, in order to have them share more fully the benefits of Scouting,
- to multiply our interactions with the non-Scout world and to create national and regional alliances with it, as is done at world level,
- to substantially increase the financing of Scout projects and the capital endowment of the World Scout Foundation,
- to increase the ambition of both our members and our Movement to play a key global role in an increasingly globalized world,
- and, finally, to make of 2007 an immensely successful launching pad for our second century of Scouting.

I thank you for your attention.

July 2002