

38th World Scout Conference

PROPOSED CONFERENCE RESOLUTION

Note: The proposal is being communicated to all NSOs in the form in which it was received by the World Scout Bureau. As part of its responsibilities, the Resolutions Committee of the Conference will undertake any necessary redrafting before the proposal is considered by the Conference. See Conference Document No. 2, Rules of Procedure.

GREATER DECENTRALISATION

Moved by: Singapore Scout Association

Seconded by: Boy Scouts of the Philippines; Bharat Scouts & Guides

The Conference

- recognizing the growing desire of NSOs to participate more actively in, and contribute to the decision-making process in WOSM

- recommends that the Regional Committees and the Regional Offices are encouraged with support from WSB in Geneva to play a greater role in the decision-making process.
- recognizes that the strength of WOSM is its diversity and that any initiatives to strengthen the global scout image and brand should build on this strength without having to dilute the uniqueness of the NSOs
- decides that the World Scout Bureau implements a transparent, rigorous and equitable budgeting process for all its offices.
- recommends that there should be a more equitable distribution of financial resources, with adequate safeguards and accountability, to ensure that there is a budget for all offices which is pro-growth.

Additional comments from NSO:

Areas of Concern

In the last few years there were policies and practices that tended to centralize the decision-making processes. While there are merits in this move, particularly the need for greater coherence within and branding of scouting as a world movement, this has reduced the responsiveness of the organization. Furthermore NSOs are beginning to ask if the primary function of the World Scout Bureau, which includes the Regional Offices, is to serve or "control" the NSOs. If it is the former then it would be more effective and efficient if the Regional Offices are strengthened because they are more attuned to the needs of the NSOs within the Region. This must necessarily be accompanied by greater empowerment of the Regional Committees.

Greater decentralization must be accompanied by a more equitable allocation of financial resources. However, this must be accompanied by a rigorous and transparent budgeting process throughout the movement, with clearly stated targets, particularly membership growth. Equally important is the need to consider the size and membership base of each Region.

Greater coherence could still be achieved within a decentralized structure. The main issue is which model, or organizational philosophy, WOSM should adopt. Within the decentralized democratic model, the concerns, needs and initiatives are surfaced from the ground and the role of the WSC, supported by WSB in Geneva, is to support the NSOs, coordinate their initiatives and to make broad policies.

The move towards greater decentralization is a trend seen in almost all organizations, including commercial companies. The key driving forces are globalization, the speed of change, higher education levels in many countries with a corresponding desire to have greater involvement in the decision-making process at all levels, and the more pervasive influence of ICT. Scouting needs to respond to these global changes if it seeks to remain relevant and grows its membership. Moving towards greater centralization is a step backwards, against global trends. Failure to recognize the aspirations of key stakeholders will curtail the growth and development of NSOs and hence the growth of Scouting Movement around the world.