

**SERVAS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY –  
SICOGA 2015**

**Totara Springs, Matamata, New Zealand**

**10 – 16 October 2015**

**Decisions taken on October 11 2015**

<b>Serial No</b>	<b>General Assembly Decisions</b>
1	Servas Rwanda is accepted as a member of Servas International
2	Servas Vietnam is accepted as a member of Servas International
3	Servas Bangladesh is reinstated as a member of Servas International
4	Servas Bulgaria is reinstated as a member of Servas International
5	The status of Servas Kenya is changed from member group to national group
6	The status of Servas Sri Lanka is changed from member group to national group.
7	The status of Servas Bolivia is changed from member group to national group. This will be reviewed after one year.
8	The status of Servas Uzbekistan is changed from member group to national group.
9	Rules of Order were approved
10	Agenda on Page 7 of the Conference Booklet was approved
11	Agenda version 14 was approved
12	The minutes of the 2012 GA were approved
13	Officer reports were accepted
14	The 2013 Auditors' report was received

**Decisions taken on October 12 2015**

1	As part of the General Assembly (GA) process, a record of the results of elections and the decisions made at the GA, be submitted for approval before the end of the GA.
2	The following motion, passed by Servas International Assembly 2012 on 25.8.2012 and recorded in the minutes as serial number 5, will be treated as null and void: "starting at the 2012 GA, a person cannot be nominated for elected SERVAS international positions if he/she has been in any elected or appointed Servas International position for a total of 6 or more years within the last 10 years. The clock starts at the 2012 GA".
3	EXCO will establish a working group that includes the small countries, to work to simplify the payment system in Servas.
4	It is agreed to continue with the current auditor, Vasudev Pai and Company, Bangalore, India.
5	<p>1. The financial accounting year for SI will be changed from January to December (current) to April to March (proposed) with one transition year from January 2015 to March 2016.</p> <p>2. The change of bank signatories for the SI banking to the new EXCO members shall be completed within three months of the GA.</p> <p>3. The current Financial Operating Procedures (FOP) suggestions from the internal audit committee shall be approved. In the future, the FOP shall be reviewed and modified as needed following each GA with any changes to be approved in a</p>

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	<p>timely fashion.</p> <p>4. EXCO will appoint an internal travel committee to research and determine reasonable reimbursements for funded delegates to the SI GA and other events.</p> <p>5. Any funded delegates from countries owing stamp fees shall have the amount owed by their country deducted from their funding and the deducted amount shall be credited to the stamp account of the country. Delegates will be expected to receive the balance from their national treasurer.</p>
6	<p>The GA supports the initiative to set up an independent international Servas youth fund based in Britain as a charitable trust. Its aim will be to widen access to young people from around the world so they can take part in Servas activities.</p> <p>This is to replace the temporary fund currently managed by Servas Britain which was supported by the 2009 GA. Donations will be sought from individual members (including bequests), national groups and outside organisations.</p> <p>As in 2015, decisions about the allocation of grants to young people will be made by an international panel of members who are representative of regions across Servas. The trustees of the charitable trust fund in Britain will be Servas members although it will be financially managed independently of Servas Britain.</p>

**Decisions taken on 14 October 2015**

1	Jonny Saganger (Sweden) is elected as President.
2	Ann Greenhough (Britain) is elected as Vice President.
3	Penny Pattison (Canada) is elected as General Secretary.
4	LV Subramanian (India) is elected as Treasurer.
5	Pablo Colangelo (Argentina) is elected as Host List Coordinator.
6	Danielle Serres (France) is elected as Peace Secretary.
7	A long term strategy will be created for Servas International UN involvement, which includes encouraging national groups and members to actively participate in learning about the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and take local actions. To achieve this, a Servas working team with a maximum of five people will be established with a budget of 5000CHF for a three-year period. Funds can be used to support internships as needed, travel expenses, events, publications, etc.
8	A budget of 2000 CHF is to be allocated over a three-year period to cover costs where a conflict can only be resolved through face-to-face mediation or when translation is needed.
9	The GA received the 2016-2018 Budget as presented by EXCO.

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10	<p>SI Exco is encouraged to promote interest in an international meeting mid-way to the next SI conference and GA in 2018. This would be a mainly self-funding event, focused on a specific theme connected to developing Servas as a peace organisation. A budget of 1000 Euro is proposed to support planning for the event. Such a meeting would not have any decision-making powers. However, it would give chance for a review of progress on 2015 GA decisions and encourage cooperation on future work before the 2018 GA.</p> <p>If possible it should be located in a different region to the 2014 SI meeting in Europe to give members elsewhere the opportunity to participate. Any such an event should aim to coordinate with other face to face meetings required for SI tasks. For example, meetings involving Exco, audit, nominations and development committees or alternatively for it to be combined with a youth or regional meeting.</p>
11	<p>The following five people are elected to the Development Committee: Ewa Dzierzawski (Poland) Fidele Rutayisire (Rwanda) Kristina Buynova (Russia) Kiat Yun Tan (Malaysia) Maria Fernanda Vomero (Brazil)</p>
12	<p>The following three people are elected to the audit committee: Ashley Burrowes (New Zealand) Emmanuel Kakinda (Uganda) Graham Robertson (Australia)</p>
13	<p>Anna Koster (USA) is elected as the Servas International Archivist.</p>
14	<p>The following three people are elected to the Conflict Resolution Committee: Martin Henner (USA) Clare Mateke (Zambia) Alvany Santiago (Brazil)</p>
15	<p>The following three people are elected to the Nomination Committee: Dianne Peterson (Singapore) Susanne Thestrup (Denmark) Norma Nicholson (Australia)</p>
16	<p>The following three people are elected to the SI Job Descriptions and Statutes Committee: Amir Levy (Israel) Jack Huang (China) Chris Jones (Canada)</p>
17	<p>Chris Patterson (New Zealand) is elected as the Distant Vote Administrator</p>

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**Decisions taken on Thursday 15 October 2015**

1	The following five people are elected to the Youth Leadership Committee: Susanna Martinez (Spain) Janek Dzierzawski (Poland) Karolina Paleckova (Czech Republic) Asiia Zhakypova (Kyrgyzstan) Pablo Chufeni (Argentina)
2	It is agreed to register Servas International (SI) as a recognized international non-governmental organisation (INGO) with a domicile, with a budget of 27000 CHF from the SI financial reserves for the period 2015-2018. This will include an international group of legal experts to ensure that SI is registered in a way that works effectively for all countries.
3	It is agreed to include Spanish as a language used in communication in Servas International, with a budget of 10000 CHF for the first year, to be reviewed, and to appoint a coordinator.
4	It is agreed that Exco - or one or more persons appointed by Exco - should actively nurture relations with other NGOs that share similar values and goals as Servas. The result of the analysis and the outreach activity should be presented at the next SI GA. Budget 5000 CHF over 3 years.
5	It is agreed that the SI Archivist will be given a budget of 1000 CHF for each of the next three years, to be used to arrange to set up an electronic Servas archives system.
6	It is agreed that Servas International and the Servas National Groups shall actively work towards a rejuvenation of Servas. To do this, EXCO will appoint a workgroup of at least two people who will have the task of promoting the rejuvenation of Servas. The workgroup will report the results to EXCO by the end of 2016, for distribution. They will also report the results and future strategy to the next GA.
7	As a priority the GA supports the promotion of Servas as a family-, child-, and youth-friendly organization. Exco is encouraged to create a special interest group for those willing to develop ideas and initiate activities for Servas families worldwide. Exco shall direct the ServasOnline team to create a section of the ServasOnline website dedicated to sharing information about, and helping to implement, action plans for family and youth programs.
8	It is agreed that:  1. In the period 2015-18 SI Exco should coordinate a review of the SI structure. This is to include both elected and unelected SI committees reviewing their own structure, purpose, functions and name, taking into account the impact of changes that result from Servas going online. Each SI officer should review their role in a similar way. 2. SI Exco will work with the Job Descriptions and Statutes Committee to ensure that outcomes of the reviews from each committee and SI officer are drawn together into an overview of the current SI structure with any proposed changes.

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	<p>3.This overview will be made available to national groups and SI committees for consultation.</p> <p>4.Following this consultation the updated SI structure should be put forward at the 2018 GA to include any proposed changes to the SI statutes.</p> <p>5.The aim is to create a structure that promotes Servas as a stream-lined, forward-thinking organisation which continues to maintain its core values as a peace organisation.</p> <p>6.The review should consider the sustainability of the current structure and whether committees and SI roles should be joined together, disbanded or new committees and roles created.</p> <p>To inform the decision-making at GA 2018, Exco is encouraged to put in place, on a trial basis, any new ways of working or structures that do not require a change in the statutes.</p>
9	<p>It is agreed that EXCO shall annually update the Servas Handbook and all SI documents referenced in the handbook as being current, clear and accurate and distribute to all National Groups at each General Assembly. The first update shall be available within a year of today. The budget is 200 CHF per year.</p>
10	<p>It is agreed that Servas national groups around the world will use the new SI logo.</p>
11	<p>It is agreed that SI develops a ‘Code of Ethics and Behaviour’ that will be binding on all Servas members including officers. The SI Conflict Resolution Committee (CRC) will work with the Servas International Peace Secretary and other interested parties to develop a draft to be voted by the next GA or sooner by Distant Vote. This draft will include existing materials such as the Report on Handling Complaints written by Marijke Batenburg (New Zealand).</p>
12	<p>It is agreed that Servas officers are obliged to work with the SI CRC when there is a formal complaint. When SI CRC is asked to mediate in a conflict Servas officers must comply with the decisions reached through mediation. Failure to comply will mean there is follow up action according to the seriousness of the complaint and the lack of a timely response from the officer. The SI CRC will continue to support neutral mediation and positive collaboration.</p>
13	<p>1. The GA approves the creation of a Servas International strategy for both sustaining and developing the organisation at a local and regional level.</p> <p>2. To achieve this aim, SI Exco should first encourage national groups and those in key SI roles (including the area coordinator if in post) to cooperate in creating a development strategy in each Servas region.</p> <p>3. In collaboration with national groups it is envisaged that the Development Committee and Youth Leadership Committee will play key roles in formulating such strategies as well as promoting activities and initiatives likely to increase Servas membership across all age groups and backgrounds.</p> <p>4. There should be particular emphasis on addressing the difficulties encountered in regions such as Africa and Central America in maintaining</p>

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	<p>membership of some national groups at a viable level.</p> <p>6. Whilst looking at regional strategies the opportunity should be taken to evaluate the functions of the area coordinator role alongside the alternative ways in which national groups in some regions have worked together in shared activities. This is with a view to determining the best way of providing leadership, support and innovation within Servas regions in the future.</p> <p>7. SI Exco, in collaboration with other SI committees, should aim to bring together the work on development strategies in each region and formulate them into an overall SI strategy for regional development.</p> <p>8. Any proposals requiring changes to the SI statutes should be presented to the 2018 GA.</p>
14	<p>The GA approves the promotion of opportunities for in-depth and longer-stay experiences alongside the more usual encounters between hosts and travellers during a two night stay.</p> <p>Such opportunities will be coordinated on the new SI website under one ‘umbrella’, a resource to be known as Making Connections.</p> <p>Information will be posted on the Making Connections page, creating links and bringing together interested travellers with those hosts who can offer a variety of opportunities for extended stays or more in-depth visits.</p> <p>Volunteering, work experience, language learning, sharing skills and knowledge and connecting with local peace organisations are examples of potential activities that could be arranged in this way.</p> <p>The aim is to encourage the exchange of ideas and experiences between a traveller and their host family and community with the emphasis on informal local networks known personally to the host.</p> <p>Guidelines for the project:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As well as information from individual hosts and travellers being posted the Making Connections page will also link to websites of countries where specific in-depth or longer stay opportunities are listed.</li> <li>2. The idea of language learning with a purpose will be encouraged for all ages ideally through a specific activity, for example, a traveller exploring a special interest, acquiring new skills or volunteering.</li> <li>3. Given the particular needs of young people, SYLE will continue to be about language learning for those under 30 although it will be possible to publicise the scheme under the Making Connections umbrella as well as it being part of youth activities.</li> <li>4. Members of all ages will be able to take up the opportunities offered through the resource unless there is a specific reason to restrict to one age group.</li> <li>5. Local groups of hosts will be able to connect with similar groups elsewhere with a view to exchange visits.</li> <li>6. National groups will be encouraged to identify a lead person to promote opportunities in their country and to be a link to SI resources and information.</li> <li>7. When going beyond a two nights stay, advanced planning for visits will be</li> </ol>

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	<p>essential as it is likely to involve hosts making specific arrangements. As with SYLE, both host and traveller should make sure there is a clear understanding about expectations for the visit.</p> <p>8. Those managing the resource will develop guidelines for hosts and travellers planning such extended visits.</p> <p>9. Individual host entries online will in the future be able to give travellers more detailed information about a host’s interests and community than has been possible in printed host lists. This could include links to websites of local organisations or projects known to the host.</p> <p>The proposed special interest network could be developed alongside this project with the possibility of sharing the same page on the SI website or being linked to it.</p>
15	<p>The GA supports the promotion of special interest networks within Servas, making use of the new SI website to develop them in a more structured way than has previously been possible.</p> <p>Linking people with shared interests has the potential to enhance both individual and group experiences in Servas.</p> <p>Families in Servas will have a dedicated webpage on the SI website to promote Servas as a family friendly organisation and to encourage connections between families both as hosts and travellers. Likewise a Servas Youth webpage will replace the previous Servas Youth website.</p> <p>Other areas of interest will be promoted either through a separate webpage to be known as Special Interest Networks, or via the proposed Making Connections page.</p> <p>The Servas Environment Network will be encouraged as a first example on which to base future special interest networks, linking in with the proposed Making Connections project and working group. The potential use of new SI website will be explored to develop the most effective way of connecting Servas members with shared interests.</p>
16	<p>The issue of Letters of Introduction (LOIs) for foreign travellers in passing by another country has already been occurring for a while. However, specific procedures must be established officially to make sure this practice is done in accordance to Servas statutes. In this way, here are the suggested steps for issuing a LOI for a foreigner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traveller must not have any previous problems with Servas in his/her country of birth or residence. If he/she had belonged to Servas in the past and quit it for some reason, this information needs to be reported to the interviewer;</li> <li>• Traveller has to be interviewed by a local interviewer, but in case of impossibility due to language barrier, the local interviewer becomes responsible for making contact with an interviewer from the traveller’s country of origin and set up a Skype interview;</li> <li>• The traveller must fill out the letter of introduction and pay for a valid one-year stamp. If the host country has no paper stamp to issue, an e-stamp should be issued by Servas Online;</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In his/her LOI it must be informed the letter was issued “in-transit”, since he/she is not a current Servas member of that country;</li> <li>• The National Secretary and Host List Coordinator of the traveller’s country of birth or residence have to be informed before the traveller has been interviewed, and a copy of his/her LOI sent to them;</li> <li>• The interviewer commits to provide all necessary info about Servas procedures for the traveller;</li> <li>• It is desirable that the traveller meets an interviewer in his/her country of birth or residence once he/she is back, in order to create a bond between him/her and Servas;</li> <li>• Every time this “in-transit issued LOI” is used again, during its valid period, the traveller should inform both his/her interviewer and the person-in-charge in his/her country of birth or residence.</li> <li>• By the end of the validity of his/her “in-transit issued LOI”, the person can renovate it ONLY in his/her country of birth or residence.</li> </ul>
17	<p>The GA approves Servas promoting ethical travel, concern for the environment and human rights as part of its philosophy as a global peace organisation. As a statement of principle ‘Travel peacefully and walk lightly on the earth’, will be placed on the SI website. As Servas members we should be aware of the social and environmental impact of our travels.</p> <p>We should respect and protect the vulnerable communities and fragile environments that we visit as essential elements of peaceful travel. A special interest network will work in conjunction with the proposed environment network to raise awareness within Servas about issues concerning ethical travel. It will also seek to make links with organisations both local and global involved in sustainable tourism.</p>
18	<p>It is agreed that the national groups that are available to organise one or more Syle projects must communicate this fact before December 20th and June 20th of each year. The national groups of young members who are interested in participating in the Syle program must communicate this fact and the countries where the young people would like to go. This communication must be made to the International Youth Group which then prepares, within 20 days after the deadline, a list of countries that are available to organise one or more projects and a list countries requested by the young people. These lists must be immediately presented to the Executive Committees of the various countries so that the young people interested in the Syle projects can know which countries are available and the various countries can know if they are requested. The lists must also appear on the Servas International website and may be published on the websites of the various countries.</p>
19	<p>Servas encourages stays of two nights, but recognizes that one night and/or longer stays can also be of considerable value, upon mutual agreement. It is agreed that a ‘one night stay’ field should be added to the host listing, and hosts must specify that they accept this option. One night and longer stays should be highly recommended for hosts who specify WMT.</p>



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20	It is agreed to hold the next GA in 3 years' time in 2018.
21	As in Statutes Point IV 3 k, it is agreed to appoint the Treasurer, President, Vice President and General Secretary to sign on behalf of Servas International.
22	The General Assembly of Servas International approves the budget 2016 – 2018 before them today (version October 15 2015 as amended in the meeting).

**Decisions taken on Friday 16 October 2015**

1	The General Assembly of Servas International approves the decisions of the General Assembly held at Totara Springs, Matamata, New Zealand from 10 October to 16 October 2015.
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**Signed**

**President.....**

**Jonny Saganger**

**Vice President.....**

**Ann Greenhough**

**Date.....**