

Servas International
SI Exco Teleconference
Minutes
Tuesday March 31, 2015 19:00 – 21:00 GMT/UTC
Over Skype

Version: 3

Participants: **Ann Greenhough (AG); Jonny Sägänger (JS); Danielle Serres (DS); Mirek Wasilewski (MW); Jaime Romero (JR); Arnoud Philipppo (AP)**

Announced absence:

Minutes Recorder: **Penny Pattison (PP)***

NEXT MEETING: April 7, 2015 19:00 – 21:00 GMT/UTC

Actions are identified in Italics and Underline. A summary of action items is at the end of the minutes

Decisions and Motions are in bold

Meeting began at 19:10 GMT/UTC.

1. Chit-chat
2. Today's agenda
 - Added "Program to expand knowledge, workshops" was added to item 6.
 - **MOTION: The agenda was approved as amended. Passed**
3. Adoption of minutes
 - **MOTION: March 3, 2015 minutes Version 1 was approved (without JR amendments). Passed**
 - **MOTION: March 28, 2015 minutes Version 1 was approved, with the addition of "Unannounced absence/technical difficulty: Jaime Romero (JR)". Passed**
4. SI Exco decisions since March 28, 2015 None
5. Report: (6 x 5 3 min.)
 - DS reports (see Annex 1)
6. SICOGA 2015: SI Conference and SI GA 2015
 - a. Program to expand knowledge, workshops
 - There was a brainstorming of ideas for conference sessions
 - Rejuvenation of Servas membership
 - CISV education program workshop
 - Strengthen communications
 - Individual membership
 - Environment forum
 - Peace Tourism
 - Ethical travel
 - UN and SI Relationship
 - National Peace Secretaries and their relation to SI Peace Secretary
 - Motions related to the Dalesbridge summary
 - In depth travel

- Special Interest network
- Mid-term meeting
- SI Handbook
- Management Process chart
- Review of regional development (AC role)
- Body Balance (gymnastics)
- Action: All SI Exco will prepare and circulate Titles of sessions, with brief explanation and time needed

7. SI Finances

a. 2015 Consultative Budget Meeting

- MW has received input from SI News, ICT and SOLSYS project
- Further input can be accepted until April 12, 2015
- The planning will also be based on past experience
- Action: AG will send budget information for development to MW
- Action MW will send the agenda to SI Exco
- Action: If possible, MW will arrange for SI Exco to join the meeting for a short time via Skype

b. SI Finances update

- The expenses for SOLSYS and the new web presence is a major, planned and needed investment for SI
- Participation payments are being received for the 2015 conference; dealing with the details is time-consuming

8. SI Handbook

- The links to 'siexco' in the SI Handbook do not work
- Currently, the latest version is being reviewed by a native English speaker
- Action: JR will send the final version to SI Exco by April 30, 2015

9. Country Reports Not discussed

10. SI newsletter Not discussed

11. Miscellaneous. Any other business? None

12. Next SI Exco meeting: Tuesday April 7, 2015 19.00-21.00 GMT/UTC

- **Note that the Apr 7, 2015 meeting replaces the scheduled April 14, 2015 meeting**
- Second Tues of the month, from 16:00-18:00 GMT/UTC (to be reviewed after spring time change)
- Subsequent meetings: May 12, Jun 9, Jul 14, Aug 11, Sep 8

13. Meeting ended at 21:15 UTC/GMT

Mar 31, 2015 Action Items:

6. Action: All SI Exco will prepare and circulate Titles of sessions, with brief explanation and time needed

7. Action: AG will send budget information for development to MW

Action MW will send the agenda to SI Exco

Action: If possible, MW will arrange for SI Exco to join the meeting for a short time via Skype

8. Action: JR will send the final version to SIO Exco by Aril 30, 2015

Action Items from Previous Meetings:

See previous Action Items documents

Annex 1 SI Exco reports

DS: Geneva March 16 to March 20, 2015 Report:

I was hosted for two days by Lorette Dubout in Annecy (55kms from Geneva), and for the next two days by Daniela Doenges in Crozet, 15kms from Geneva (I was her first guest). Both are Servas France members, and SI UN additional representatives at UNOG.

The goals were to attend several meetings being part of the HRC 28th Session, help build the SI UN representatives team, and start planning future activities.¹

Monday 16, March

Lorette Dubout came from Annecy with 2 Servas France members, Agnès Northey and Janine Feuillet, who were able to get access with no difficulty, thanks to previous arrangements. Unfortunately, Jeannette Lugin, also from Servas France, had a car accident and was unable to attend.

In the afternoon, there was a presentation by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Ms. Yanghee Lee. Everyone was much interested with the HRC proceedings, and listening to the debate with member states and NGOs. We displayed some Servas France leaflets brought by Lorette. Afterwards, we met with Ms. Chris Lewa, the director of the Arakan Project humanitarian group, who explained for us the dire situation of the Rohingyas fleeing by boat from western Burma.

Tuesday 17, March

Lorette Dubout took me for a tour in Annecy, with a beautiful weather. On our way, we visited an exhibition on Wild life in Japan during winter. We went and met Jeannette Lugin in a recovery health center. She shared with us her many contacts with local NGOs involved in peace and social justice activities. In the evening, we gathered with Agnès and David Northey, Servas France Vice-president, and discussed possible contribution to Servas France AGM in May.

Wednesday 18, March

We met in Crozet at Daniela Doenges, with Lorette Dubout and Vreny Boesch, another UN Additional Representative at UNOG, from Servas Switzerland. Catherine Bürer (Servas Switzerland) and Magnus Adams (Servas Germany) were unable to attend. We had a very fruitful 2 hours meeting, discussing recent and future SI relations with the UN2. We then went to UNOG to participate in a briefing organized for the NGOs with HRC President, Mr. Joachim Rucker. It was a great opportunity to meet other NGOs and distribute SI UN Observers « business cards »! We were pleased to find out some people had already heard about Servas!

Thursday 19, March

In the morning, I participated in a panel discussion on Human Rights Education for the youth organized by the Council of Europe. We had lunch at the UN cafeteria with Lorette and Catherine Bürer (who just had an hour to spend). I again insisted that no statement should be signed or cosigned on behalf of SI without previous agreement from me and/or from SI President. Catherine Bürer is the current Main representative, and she works at the Red Cross museum, across the street from the UN. We discussed Catherine's seemingly very limited availability, causing some concerns about her role.

In the afternoon, Lorette attended a meeting on Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (it is worth noting that in the HRC main meeting room, it is mentioned « State of Palestine »), while Daniela and I attended another meeting, on Combating global racism, organized by the International Youth and Student

¹ Total expenses claimed for this 4/5 days mission : 163.45 euros (flight ticket + local transport).

² See Annex.

Movement for the United Nations and by the World Against Racism Network (WARN). We had a very good exchange of views with Jan Lönn, from WARN.

Afterwards, we went to Room XX and listened to several NGOs presentations on the human rights situation in Madagascar.

In the evening, on the occasion of the International day of Francophonie, we were invited to a concert by Youssou N'Dour, committed singer and songwriter from Senegal.

Friday 20, March

I went and registered SI for an oral statement to be given next week by Daniela Doenges, hopefully on March 24, on xenophobia and racial discrimination, and unfortunately had to run to the airport, missing the afternoon panel discussion on « Learning from historical tragedies to combat racial discrimination today », on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of racial discrimination.

In conclusion

It is somehow unpredictable what a HRC Session exact agenda will be, and although I was able to accomplish much more than in previous occasions when I was at the UNOG (it was my fourth time since I am SI Peace Secretary), I wish to highlight how much learning, teambuilding, and outreach activities do take time and perseverance! For SI to be really effective in its relation with the UN, we need to adopt a clear strategy.



Annex
Meeting in Crozet on Wednesday March, 18

Present: Vreny Boesch, Daniela Doenges, Lorette Dubout, Danielle Serres.

Excused: Magnus Adams

Absent: Catherine Bürer

We first went around the table for each of us to express her feelings and expectations. Vreny (25 years Servas Switzerland member) said that she thought “a fresh wind [was] blowing in Servas”. Lorette mentioned some discrepancies between national and international views, for example regarding linking with likeminded NGOs. Also she was concerned about informational deficiencies. Daniela said she was very interested in intercultural/interfaith dialogue. When she met Magnus during 2013 summer, she adhered to the ideals of Servas. Danielle said one of her main goal from the start has been to build a team of UN Observers, not only in Geneva but among the 3 UN venues (Geneva, NYC and Vienna).

Danielle suggested that each member of the team would write 2 paragraphs about “why he/she thinks it’s important that Servas International as an NGO is at the UN, and his/her motivations in being a SI UN Observer.”

We then tried to follow upon the UN Job description created in 2014, and it was mentioned that the informational process about the UN among Servas community should be improved. Danielle could be in charge of the international level, through SI website and newsletter. Vreny could do the same with Servas Switzerland. Lorette offered to publish info in Brèves de Servas, and Servas France website and newsletter. But still the question is how to disseminate the information to the global Servas community. Could be with SI Vice-president Bulletin. And/or National Peace Secretaries network, and other Servas key persons when there is no National Peace Secretary.

We also mentioned it would be necessary to clearly inform Servas members about how and when they could attend HRC sessions in Geneva, keeping in mind that large groups as in September 2014 are not a good solution, because of administrative restrictions, and also for the learning experience efficiency. Knowing more about practice at the UN, we could aim to regularly submit written and/or oral statements, and try to reach to other NGOs so they cosigned our statements. To this end, our presence should become more visible.

We went on considering a future event of a different kind, maybe during next HRC Session in June. We could invite a limited number of Servas interested members, making clear we are not in charge of the logistics (i.e. lodging, transport, funding, ect.). Reservation for a room has to be made well in advance, also to get a good timeslot to attract audience. We need to define a topic, to then invite speakers and other NGOs, send invitations, ect. It should promote Servas approach to combat xenophobia opening our doors to other people, or to travel to the unknown, promoting dialogue among different cultures.

Then it was mentioned that Servas travelers could be “ambassadors of peace”, reporting on human rights issues they could experience and/or witness, and also Servas hosts locally could provide useful information. Those reports could be collected by National Peace Secretaries, who would report to SI Peace Secretary, and then submitted to the UN relevant entities, as a contribution to UN work and mission.

Also after Vreny had to leave, we mentioned that some young Servas people are asking us about internships, for one or several weeks, and this is something we might want to organize (tutoring) during next HRC Session in June.

We could have another Skype meeting beginning of April, hopefully including Magnus and Catherine this time.
