

TO FEZANA Member Associations
FEZANA Small Groups
Chairs, FEZANA Committees and Ad Hoc Committees

FROM FEZANA "UN-NGO" Ad-Hoc Committee's
Sub-Committee to Celebrate the 3000th Anniversary of Zoroastrian culture
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SUBJECT **3000th anniversary of Zoroastrian Culture**
A UNESCO associated event

DATE November 8, 2003

The Executive Board and General Conference of UNESCO, at its 161st and 162nd sessions, received from member states, 47 anniversaries to be celebrated in the year 2002-2003 with which it could be associated (these were presented for approval to the General Conference by UNESCO's Director General.)

Among the 47 anniversaries to be celebrated in the year 2002-2003, which UNESCO is associated with, is the "**3000th anniversary of Zoroastrian culture**". This anniversary was submitted by the State of Tajikistan. The government of this Central Asian country, very concerned about their Zarathushti heritage, and eager to safeguard the memory of their ancestral religion and culture, took this initiative to propose this celebration – for which we applaud and thank them .

UNESCO PARIS, Bureau of Public information has confirmed that "Executive Board and General Conference has voted in favor of celebrating the 3000th anniversary of Zoroastrian culture in the year 2003" This information was sent by Mr Roni Amelan, UNESCO Bureau of Information and announced by Mr Perera of UNESCO at the Parzor premier and exhibition in Delhi, India.

Each member state who has proposed the anniversary has to finance its own activities. Tajikistan is planning a major seminar in the month of November 2003, whose details we have not as yet received. Any contribution from UNESCO will be financed under UNESCO's participation program.

FEZANA'S RESPONSE

The FEZANA "UN-NGO" Ad-Hoc Committee Co-chairs Homi Gandhi (ZAGNY) and Behram Pastakia (ZAMWI), FEZANA coordinators at the UN, have been in contact with the authorities of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. At the 2003 FEZANA AGM in Boston, it was decided that FEZANA take the lead in organizing appropriate events to celebrate the 3000th anniversary

. In keeping with this we suggest that:

- FEZANA Member Associations, associate with and spread the word about our celebrating the Tajikistan initiated celebration of Zoroastrian Culture and Heritage through three millennia.
- FEZANA Member Associations create or associate their various North American activities and outreach with these celebrations, thus contributing to "worldwide" solidarity and visibility of our faith and culture.
- those of us who can, should try to attend Tajikistan's celebrations, and show our solidarity and support for their efforts.

- from now until the end of the year, any event your association organizes should mention this celebration; and perhaps consider the specific event as part of the celebration.
- printed materials (newsletters, event flyers, emails, etc.) highlight these celebrations. A special brochure and write-up is being prepared which we will send to you electronically to use. This can be used for distribution to your community, or to the press in your area or for a press conference.

Organizing and orchestrating celebrations that are of quality and foster interest in our religion, traditions, practice, culture and heritage is a mammoth undertaking that needs years of preparations and we have only 5 months. Hence we are suggesting these action items:

- Form a sub-committee of enthused people ... particularly our youth ... in your own communities.
- Send Dolly Dastoor the name and contact information of the person who will be the point of contact for this FEZANA UN-NGO sub-committee. We would like to maintain a record of all the activities organized by the member associations
- Share your ideas with the FEZANA UN-NGO sub-committee so that it can distribute them to other FEZANA Member Associations.
- Finally, please feel free to contact any of the members of this sub-committee – we all have a lot to do and we want to get going!

Some of the additional activities we would like to suggest are:

- Encourage the public library and the libraries in the schools in your area to have a book display on Zarathushti religion, art, famous Zarathushtis. If the library does not have enough books, collect books from the local Z community members and offer them to the library to display. If you have any extra copies with you, donate them to the public library
- Organize a lecture series/seminars at an institution of higher learning near you that highlights the Zoroastrian influence on the Western world. This can be done where there are several Z students in the University.
- Organize events (happenings, film festivals, talks, radio talk shows) that celebrate aspects of Zoroastrian doctrine, culture, history in an appropriate manner
- Organize public readings of Zarathushti authors and there are a few in North America .
- Send press releases re your events to the press; or suggest story ideas to them
- Mention this at interfaith meetings; ask organizations to include a paragraph on the celebrations in their forthcoming newsletters and programs
- Associations around the world could organize a special event for the Ayatheram Ghambar in October 2003 inviting community members and local politicians to attend.
- Get a proclamation from the Mayor, Governor-General. Etc

Some of the activities we are planning centrally: a special commemorative pin, a totebag, a stamp, press releases, a powerpoint presentation which all associations can use etc.

These are preliminary suggestions if you have any more do send them on, or if you have any special expertise which you can offer to enrich this celebration please volunteer.

The sub-committee looks forward to working with all of you,