



The FEDERATION of ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS of NORTH AMERICA
313 Charlie Way, Weatherford, Texas, 76087-2122 USA

REPORT ON THE WORLD BODY

Presented by FEZANA President, Firdosh Mehta
@ Annual General Meeting, Atlanta, – 28 May 2006

Respected Community Elders, Presidents and Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The ONE WORLD BODY we envisaged, was not a pontificating Body on Zoroastrian religion. It did not promote or promulgate any one particular school of thought. It did not get involved in deciding who can or cannot be a Zarathushti. This requirement of religious authority is left to The Mobed Councils; hence no definition of a Zarathushti was included, and the acceptance of Zarathushtis of various schools of thought was left to the Member Associations on principle of religious Autonomy.

We look at FEZANA as an umbrella for its 24 Registered Zarathushti Member Associations from USA & Canada.
FEZANA is primarily a welfare, harmonizing and community service organization at a CONTINENTAL level.

We were trying to extrapolate this successful formula to the international level. Understanding that, at the global level there would be different group dynamics, we the group of elected leaders of different existing organizations came together to create the platform for such a World Body.

However, we did recognize the lacunae of such a concept of Body of Bodies, which did not have an avenue of recognition at the individual level. WZO being there in existence at the time, was recognized as a good available avenue to include the individual component.

We were firstly happy to see that the group dynamics of UK, in terms of the working together of WZO and ZTFE, was changing in the desired way. Hence, the tripartite vehicle of IZO/WZOI/WZOF was conceived and accepted in principle, by all the stakeholders at that time. Even if this one success was derived out of all this activity, we at FEZANA are more than happy for it.

FEZANA MEMBERS HAVE EXPRESSED THE NEED FOR ONE WORLD BODY, and accepted this tripartite model. This tripartite organization was NOT to be a

religiously doctrinal and theologically pontificating body. It honored and respected the independence of every Member Association's region to define and establish their meaning of the term "Zoroastrian". This was ensured by many clauses included in the drafts of the Constitutions of The ONE World Body in IZO/WZOI/WZOF. It would not be a proselytizing body, nor would it be a dictating body on religious matters.

The protection of infrastructure and property of each region was enshrined in the documents. Zarathushtis without parental lineage could not become its office bearers.

Under these conditions of Autonomy of religious expression, we were in favor of creating a World Body that was primarily a community SERVICE organization to make the life of mainstream Zoroastrians, a more happy and productive life.

We were very pleased to include 2 of the community leaders from IRAN, making us a Group of 12 elected leaders, at the London World Congress.

The London World Congress also was the venue where many pronged approaches were tried, to carve out a World Body acceptable to the major regions.

The FEZANA Working Group addressed the G-10, made other presentations, and generally tried very hard to derive some consensus. We thank our WBWG and their chair Khorshed Jungalwala, for their sincere and enduring plugging away at the analysis and reporting to our community. Ladies and gentlemen please applaud their work.

However, the tide turned on us with the "status quo" group in India, gaining the support of the Anjumans of India, on the concern of the newly converted/accepted Zarathushtis demanding and getting the community chattels and property of the PARSI community, by virtue of deriving legitimacy to access such PARSI infrastructure in the future, as part of this erroneously labeled "cosmopolitan" world body. With the overwhelming members of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Associations of India, convinced of this perceived possibility, even though all the necessary safeguard clauses were added, signaled the demise of this yet to be born organization.

It is with deep sense of regret and failure that I stand before you today, fully responsible for our actions towards a world body that turned out to be so close and yet so far.

In trying to respect and include the INDIVIDUALS component of our community, we lost a golden opportunity of a "Body of Bodies" which incidentally FEZANA is.

We now have a plethora of community organizations claiming to be world bodies, such as the WZO, The Zarathushti Assembly and WAPIZ.

So, we can place a moratorium on this type of activity with the Individual component.

We still feel that the “Body of Bodies” concept is the way to go; then a separate global organization should be created; where there would be no Individuals or Federations, and only local Zoroastrian registered associations all over the world would join. All would have a single vote and be equal among equals.

If the Board and the Executive of FEZANA were to embark on such a mission, I would be willing to put my shoulder to this wheel to make it happen.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the sheer awesome patience and enthusiasm of Roshan & Rohinton Rivetna. Their dedication is par-excellence and beyond our wildest imagination. Their contribution in the World Body effort is matchless. We cannot thank them enough.

And the cool, calm, and almost spiritual presence of Behram Pastakia. For his guidance and insight, for which I am truly indebted. Thank you Behram.

I thank you for this opportunity to make this presentation to you.
If any of you have any questions, you are absolutely most welcome to ask me, so that I may get an opportunity to explain in further detail.

The future is always bright for those who dare to glare at the Sun.

Ushtaa!