

REPORT ON CONTINUING WORLD BODY DELIBERATIONS

July 2nd and 3rd, 2004 might turn out to be epic days in the history of the Zarathushtis World wide, as the days when four major Zoroastrian organizations, the FPZAI (including BPP), the ZTFE, the WZO and FEZANA, all came to the table for the first time to contribute to the formation of ONE World Body. An organization, which would be the FACE of the established Zarathushti communities in most of the countries of the world. With future expectations that other areas of recognized Zoroastrian populations would join soon after the acceptance of the revised drafts of the Constitutions (Articles of Incorporation, By-laws and Memorandum of Understanding) by the Executives and Members of the four constituting organizations mentioned above as its founding constituent entities.

MEETING OF LEADERS IN LONDON – JULY 2, 2004

The first day, 2nd July, was a meeting of a small working group of 10 (**G-10**) representatives: Minoo Shroff & Keki Gandhi (FPZAI & BPP), Dorab Mistry & Malcolm Deboo (ZTFE), Firdosh Mehta & Behram Pastakia (FEZANA), Dinshaw Tamboly (BPP/WZO India), Rohinton Rivetna (overall coordinator), and our hosts Rumi Sethna & Rustam Dubash (WZO), at residence of Hilda & Rumi Sethna.

After a short benediction and introduction by Rumi, the discussions commenced with the tabling by Firdosh Mehta of “the Sense of the FEZANA AGM 2004” report presented by a group comprising of Khorshed Jungalwala, Sarosh Collector, Yasmin Pavri, Homi Gandhi, Behram Pastakia, Purvez Rustomji, under the leadership of Farrokh Mistree at the TAMPA AGM.

The five points of the summary of this FEZANA AGM 2004 report was presented:

- 1. All three entities (the umbrella and the two operationally independent arms) are anchored in shared principles and embody structures that are compatible with each other;**
- 2. While ensuring the operational independence of the two independent arms (namely, the WZOI and WZOF) the umbrella body (IZO) must be given the appropriate authority to ensure the long-term structural viability of the One World Body with Independent Operating Arms construct;**
- 3. The structure of the WZOI and the WZOF must be compatible to function as ONE World Body. Core procedures (e.g., time of elections, reporting, procedure of elections, etc.) must be compatible;**
- 4. The World Body derives its authority from Zarathushtis residing in Regions and these Regions must be the same for the Two Independent Operating Arms, namely, WZOI and WZOF;**
- 5. For a World Body based on the proposed structure, representation based on population, is inappropriate and can result in significant inequities (hence, representation should be based on an alternate method)**

These were agreed to by all attendees, in a general sense of approval, by consensus.

Behram Pastakia emphasized the need to form a body in the near future and not lose the momentum gained.

Everyone reiterated the concept of One World Body, based on the “Sense of the Jan 2003 Mumbai Meeting” and subsequently developed into the triad: the IZO (International Zoroastrian Organization) with its two independent operating arms, one for the Federations & Associations (where there are no Federations) called the WZOF and the Individual arm, the WZOI (the current WZO with a revised WZO-2002 constitution and with further updates).

The **G-10** then proceeded to review a draft constitution for IZO prepared and presented by Firdosh Mehta of FEZANA a few days prior to this meeting. This draft was vetted in detail, and a consensus was reached with mark-ups.

Issues / concerns raised requiring prolonged discussion were:

1. The office bearers of the IZO should be Zoroastrians of continuous Parsi/Iranian patrilineal descent, and who had a duly constituted Navjote performed by an ordained Mobed.

Difficulties in deriving at a universally acceptable definition was recognized, but there was general understanding that the newly proselytized Zoroastrians with no Parsi/Irani lineage at all, would not be considered for this office, at least for 10 years, till the general acceptance levels would be updated worldwide.

For now a “Letter of Common Understanding” addressing this topic, outside of the Constitution, was suggested for later consideration.

FEZANA expressed preference for NO particular definition in the documentation. The representatives of WZOI and WZOF would heed to these concerns expressed by some members of the **G-10**, during the election of the four IZO Office Bearers. The selection process specified in the constitutions of WZOF and WZOI would provide the necessary safeguards.

2. The WZOI being an organization of Individuals should NOT have any Associations as Members where a Federation exists, and such a Federation will also be a member of WZOF.

The fact is that some Associations are already members of WZO (future WZOI). Since the Memorandum of Understanding separates the functions of WZOF and WZOI, and if some Association wishes to participate in the Function assigned to WZOI, then it would be improper to deprive them of such an opportunity for the overall good of our community. To promote the concept of a true “Federation of Federations” for the WZOF, the representatives of WZO were willing to consider a moratorium on any new Association to WZOI pending acceptance of their Members Board.

3. Regions as defined in WZOI and WZOF should be similar.

WZO representatives agreed to do so for WZOI based on the regions defined by WZOF.

4. Election procedure and process for WZOI Office bearers and WZOF Office bearers to be similar.

There was concern expressed by WZO representatives of inherent difficulty in the implementation of this concept, as there were areas with very few individual

members. However, they have acknowledged the importance of this issue and agreed to bear it in mind when WZOI Constitution is finalized.

The meeting continued with a review of the WZOI draft, which was essentially the WZO 2001/02 revised Constitution reviewed by WZO Counsel and accepted by their International Board Members, with all reference to COF removed as the COI would now evolve into WZOI. Rustam would revise this draft addressing the concerns expressed earlier and await the WZOF revised draft to include similarities where required.

Firdosh would revise the IZO draft and resubmit to **G-10** for final review prior to sending it to members of all the 4 organizations for final ratification.

The review of the WZOF draft was left for the next day at the meeting at Zoroastrian House UK.

It was unanimously agreed that Mr. Minoo Shroff, the Chairman of Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) & FPZAI, representing currently the largest concentration of Zoroastrians in the world, would be the first president of the IZO.

A very hearty lunch and a sumptuous dinner with tea and snacks over the course of the day showed the best hospitality that Hilda & Rumi provided to all. We thank them very much for hosting this meeting.

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Report prepared by Firdosh Mehta in co-operation with Rohinton & Roshan Rivetna and Behram Pastakia.

31<sup>st</sup> July 2004

## **Continued after meeting on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2004.**

### **WORLD BODY DISCUSSION MEETING IN LONDON – JULY 3, 2004**

After the very positive and congenial atmosphere of the first day, we started the second day's meetings at the Zoroastrian House, with ZTFE as our hosts, chaired by Dorab Mistry.

#### **MEETING WITH KHOJESTE MISTREE / TAHAMTAN ARESH**

The pre lunch meeting commenced with a benediction by Er. Russi Bhedwar and included Minoo Shroff, Keki Gandhi, Firdosh Mehta, Roshan & Rohinton Rivetna, Behram Pastakia, Dorab Mistry, Rusi Dalal, Malcolm Deboo, Paurushasp Jilla, Kobad Avari, Jehangir Sarosh and special invited guests Khojeste Mistree and Tahamtan Aresh.

Khojeste Mistree presented the concerns from the INDIAN perspective of maintaining sanctity of the Parsi infrastructure and membership of Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians as understood in India. He asked for a convincing argument to establish a real need for a World Body today. His stand was that all the things that could be done for the community could be achieved via the currently established institutes and vehicles. Many positive purposes and needs were tabled for Khojeste's understanding, but he did not seem convinced. He was also invited to participate in the process and facilitate in the formation of ONE WORLD BODY. However, after much deliberation his concerns were noted, and a general understanding to bear these in mind during the formation of IZO/WZOI/WZOF, was acceptable to all participants.

Jehangir Sarosh with his vast experience in interfaith work in Europe, strongly emphasized the need to establish one representative World Body to project Zoroastrian presence on the world stage. He also wished to include the principle of local, national, regional and international autonomy in the structure of the World Body for it to function successfully. He was assured that this idea was incorporated during the deliberations of the previous day.

#### **MEETING WITH ZTFE DIGNITARIES**

After lunch the meeting continued with some ZTFE dignitaries joining the group, namely Noshir Avari, Shahrokh Shahrokh, and Firoze Munshi. ZTFE concerns for the Office Bearers of IZO/WZOI/WZOF to be Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians as per the Indian tradition, were voiced. There were serious reservations tabled by some during this meeting that in many parts of the world, especially in North America, the practice of accepting children of Parsi/Zarathushti mothers married to non-Zoroastrians, and the acceptance of individuals with Iranian lineage was now normal practice, even supported by many members of the 2 Mobed Councils in North America.

FEZANA's stand was NOT to include any definition of the term "Zarathushti", as there was no universally acceptable term available. However, the representatives of FEZANA were willing to consider presenting to their members, a selection process of IZO Officers, in the WZOI & WZOF Constitutions, that would have built in safeguards.

The election of Officers of WZOF and WZOI would be within the purview of their respective memberships, in order to uphold their autonomy and that of their constituents.

### **MEETING WITH WZO REPS TO REVIEW WZOF DRAFT**

After tea break, the meeting continued with arrival of Dinshaw Tamboly, Rumi Sethna, and Rustam Dubash. The discussions continued with a review of the draft of WZOF constitution, which was essentially the 1997 WZCF Rev# 6 document as prepared by Rohinton Rivetna, Keki Gandhi and others. It was noted that this document did not reflect changes that have occurred since 1997. Also earlier inputs from Purvez Rustomji, Firdosh Mehta and Dinshaw Tamboly were discussed. All these were reviewed in detail and the draft was suitably marked up for revision.

The establishment of regions and their consequent voting structure was deliberated at great length. After much discussion, going into dinner time, a set of founding regions (India, Iran, Europe & North America –Canada/USA) were acknowledged that would currently participate with a voting structure which would be adjusted pro-rata when other smaller regions would join.

The “emerging regions”, where no significant population of Zoroastrians of Indian/Iranian lineage currently exists, were not included in the current list. WZO representatives indicated that they will modify the WZOI document to reflect same structure as that decided by WZOF. They still expressed concern for similar voting distribution as their membership spread is not necessarily similar to WZOF.

The issue of Associations around the world also being able to become members of WZOI, was again presented as contravening to the principle of WZOI being an organization only for individual members. It was pointed out that there are already some Associations that are members of WZO, and since the functions are separate for WZOF and WZOI, and if an Association wanted to participate in those functions, then their joining WZOI would not be a duplication, but complimentary to enhancing community service. The representatives of WZO had indicated that, subject to the acceptance by WZO International Board Members; they would consider a moratorium on any further new Member Associations, but would continue with current members which could be phased out over the next 10 years when the World Body would become more blended and would not need separate operating arms.

This was acceptable to all present.

Keki Gandhi was assigned the task to complete the WZOF Constitution draft. After receipt of the IZO & WZOF updated drafts, Rustam Dubash to complete the update of the WZOI draft and send it to those (**G-10**) present at July 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

Following tentative time table was set up:

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| IZO Draft update by Firdosh to <b>G-10</b> .....                                                             | 31 July 04   |
| WZOF Draft update by Keki to <b>G-10</b> .....                                                               | 15 August    |
| WZOI Draft update by Rustam to <b>G-10</b> .....                                                             | 31 August    |
| Review and final update of all drafts by <b>G-10</b> .....                                                   | 20 September |
| Introduce documentation to representatives of IRAN.....                                                      | 20 September |
| Submit all Finalized Constitutions for Ratification by all members of the FPZAI/BPP, ZTFE, FEZANA & WZO..... | 30 September |
| Announce Ratification status of FEZANA at NA Congress.....                                                   | 30 December  |

Complete revisions and updates as part of Ratification Process.....1 Mar 05  
Initiate registration process for IZO/WZOF/WZOI .....10 Mar  
Announce Registration initiation at Navrooz Programs .....21 Mar  
Complete Registration Process.....15 June  
Announce Registration completion at World Congress .....24 June 05

A very hearty lunch and a sumptuous dinner with tea and snacks through the day with kind hospitality, was provided to all by Dorab Mistry and the ZTFE Team.  
We thank them very much for hosting this meeting in a cordial manner.

Inshah-Ahura! If all goes well, we will have ONE WORLD BODY that will be the FACE of the ZARATHUSHTI community to the world, as developed consensually by all stakeholders.

We invite your support and co-operation to make this a working reality.

Report prepared by Firdosh Mehta in co-operation with Rohinton & Roshan Rivetna and Behram Pastakia.  
31<sup>st</sup> July, 2004.