

Minutes of the General Assembly

-5-7 June 2016, Rome, Italy-

Present at the meeting:

1. **The list of those present may be obtained from the headquarters of the Association, 6 rue de Londres, 75009 Paris, France.**
2. **Interpreters:**
Amaya de Viu, Beth Parsons, Paula Queiroz, Mario Carbajo, William Clarke, Rui Correia, Joaquim da Silva.
3. **Minutes secretary:**
Claire-Hélène de Parseval.

AGENDA

- A. **PRAYER AND OPENING MESSAGE**
- B. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 15 JUNE 2015**
- C. **POLICY REPORT FROM PRESIDENT GENERAL**
- D. **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT OF GENERAL SECRETARY**
- E. **FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2015**
- F. **VOTE ON RESOLUTIONS**
- G. **ELECTION OF 16TH PRESIDENT GENERAL**
- H. **TALKS**
 - a. **Gushwell Brooks**
 - b. **Ella Bitar**
 - c. **Sr. Marie Raw**
 - d. **Père G. Gay**
- I. **PRESENTATION OF GLOBAL TRAINING PROGRAMME**
- J. **CHANGES TO STATUTES**
- K. **INVESTITURE CEREMONY AND SPEECH**
- L. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The President General opened the meeting.

Of the 73 Legal members, 54 were present or represented. As over 30% of the Legal members were present or represented, the Assembly was validly constituted and decisions taken by the General Assembly will be valid.

The Secretary General delegated the task of minutes secretary to Claire-Hélène de Parseval.

A. PRAYER AND OPENING MESSAGE

Sister Maureen led the prayer and the opening reflection.

This is a sacred time because each of us has travelled here to Rome, to the heart of our Church, in faithfulness to our Vincentian spirit and our expression of God's love for the Poor all around the world, because here and now, we have the promise of Jesus to be with us whenever we gather in His name. And God wants you to know His love and gratitude for every act of service you have done as a Vincentian.

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Sister Maureen also emphasized the power of the word “AND”, giving an example: Vincentian Spirituality is often described by joining together two realities. Each one has great significance in itself. When they are brought together, there is a new reality that is even stronger.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE IEC MEETING held ON 15 JUNE 2015 at Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Proposed by Clement Venter, South Africa and seconded by Adrian Abel, England&Wales

The minutes were approved unanimously by the members of the IEC.

C. POLICY REPORT FROM PRESIDENT GENERAL , Dr. Michael Thio

Every year, the President General sends to the Holy See an Annual Report of the work of the Council General International for information only.

PREAMBLE

“You did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command : Love each other” – Jn15 :16-17

The Society continues to face many challenges in the year with natural and political disasters, wars, famine, abuses of humanity, economic downturn, unemployment, refugees, adverse effects of globalisation, social exclusions etc. leading to a rapid growth of a disenfranchised “underclass”. The gap between the “haves” and the “have nots” are widening.

In her own humble ways and means the Society provides as much assistance as possible in serving our Friends-in-Need(FIN) with much emphasis in promoting Systemic Change programs whenever the opportunity abounds to empower the FIN to grow out of the poverty cycle and be self-reliant and independent and raise the dignity in their lives. We continue to bear witness to Christ in sharing God’s love with the poor globally in 150 countries with over 680,000 members and serving about 35 million poor and vulnerable people.

We share the highlights of the main activities undertaken by the Society during the year.

1. Commission for International Aid & Development(CIAD)

The Commission is engaged in and facilitates the provision of international aid and development for disaster relief efforts, repairs and construction of houses, rehabilitation projects, micro-financing, self-help programs, education, homes for homeless, refugees, etc. with special emphasis on systemic change.

These are covered under the following main sectors:

(i) Emergency Relief Services and Rehabilitation Projects arising from Disasters

This refers to tragedies as such floods, cyclones, typhoons, earthquake, wars, political and civil unrests and disease epidemic. Assistance was provided to about 25 countries and some of the International Confederation of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

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notable ones are refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Iraq and Europe, arising from the Middle East conflicts, and other relief assistance and rehabilitation projects in the Philippines, Jerusalem, Uganda, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Burundi, Bangladesh, Nepal, India and countries in IndoChina, South and West Asia, Eastern Europe and South America. This involves the provision of daily necessities, clothings, medical, temporary shelters, houses construction, home appliances, furniture etc. Activities on rehabilitation comprises programs in conducting and phasing the people gradually back to society in the provision of counselling, education and training.

(ii) Development Projects

This also involves skills and vocational training and education, agriculture and farm development, fish industry, replanting programs, self-help projects, microfinancing, etc. This is progressing well in many of the third world countries.

Systemic Change is actively promoted to enable and empower the poor to self-sufficiency and self-sustainability. This will raise their level of dignity and integrity and enable them to lead meaningful life. A better life for them and their family.

2. SSVP Members Training, Formation and Development

It is essential to have our members adequately trained, formed and developed for their tasks and role in the Society taking into consideration that there are over 800,000 members globally. This is a challenging opportunity.

An International Training Team commenced on a project about a year ago the process of developing and delivering a coherent Global Training Program to new and existing members and those in leadership roles of the Society in 150 countries. A Global approach ensures that the “true Vincentian” message contained in the training material is being delivered internationally without distortion or dilution.

The following three Training Programs are being developed:

- (i) **Information Session** this introductory session on the nature, ethos and works of the Society is for those who have expressed an interest in knowing more about the Society.
- (ii) **Membership Development Process** this is a Training Process that targets new and existing Conference members. Initially, all new and existing members will experience the same Training Program until Training becomes an integral and necessary feature of the work of the National Council. Then a National Training Program would emerge and be delivered.
- (iii) **Conference Officer Training** Conference Leadership is a necessary and essential factor for the future development of our Global Society ; those in positions of leadership at all levels need to have the confidence and competence to discharge the duties associated with their position of responsibility.

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Project Management Training Program : A Training Program that will equip those members of the Society who wish to submit Projects for assistance and funding with the necessary basic skills and knowledge with regard to the implementation, management and development of a Project.

3. SSVP Developments

- A new Society was established in Surinam, South America.
- SSVP Councils were re-established in Taiwan, El Salvador, Panama, Cuba, Paraguay, Kenya and Tanzania.
- The National Leadership Council of Ukraine is still placed in abeyance for some past years due to much friction and disruption internally. However the work of serving the poor continues which is provided by the local conferences.

4. SSVP Youth

- SSVP is a member of the Catholic Organisations for Youth in Asia (COYA). This is a group under the Youth Desk of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference. SSVP was invited to the gathering in Asia of the last Bishops' Institute for Lay Apostolate (BILA) meeting and it would be one of the organisers of the upcoming Asian Youth Gathering in Poland in July 2016.
- Youth Leaders participated in various Continental SSVP Gatherings in Asia/Oceania, Europe, South America and Africa. Youth Core Groups were formed in each continent to help the SSVP International Youth Commission implement and monitor its program in its respective region.
- SSVP International Youth Video Conference was held in September and participated by SSVP Youth members from various countries in all continents sharing their works for the poor and reflections in experiencing Christ through the person to person contact. With varying forms of poverty existing in each country, the SSVP Youth shows creativity, strength, dynamism, energy and enthusiasm in expressing its love for the poor especially in regions frequently devastated by calamities where the youth are in the forefront for relief operations.
- A SSVP Youth in the Philippines is the new Chairman of the Federation of National Youth Organisations under the Episcopal Commission on Youth of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines leading all the youth organisations in the country
- SSVP Founders Awards was launched to recognise and affirm the contribution of the youth to the Society.

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- Several SSVP National Youth Gatherings were held in various countries attributing a special significance to the Society's treasure, the Youth. This becomes an occasion for the activities and events that highlights the Church's preferential love for the youth celebrated in a Vincentian context and the promotion of the life of Blessed Frederic Ozanam, principal founder of the SSVP, and one of the intercessors of the past World Youth Days. It is also a chance for the youth members to look back at their life's journey and encounter Christ as a companion in this journey.

5. United Nations

The Society is an accredited UN NGO and has presence in New York, Geneva and UNESCO in Paris. Our representatives attend appropriate meetings and liaise and work closely with the UN representatives of the Vincentian Family comprising of the Congregation of the Mission, Daughters of Charity, Association of International Charity and SSVP in a spirit of solidarity and collaboration.

We have presence on the Human Rights Council and preparation of declarations, active participation in several working groups (Right to Development, Extreme Poverty, International Solidarity), monthly training days with the representatives of the Holy See, Caritas and forum of Catholic NGOs. For many years, the Vincentian Family have been a visible, well-recognised presence by all those working on the ground.

We choose to collaborate around our ministry of advocacy at the United Nations, respecting our individual identities and mandates, to unleash the power of advocacy we have as a family. As a united voice of the Vincentian Family we advocate for and seek empowerment of our brothers and sisters on the social and economic margins of history and society, the excluded and our wounded Mother Earth.

We envision a world where the integral development of the human person is safeguarded. We promote a world of sustainable livelihoods, systemic change, economic justice, social inclusion and environmental protection, particularly for the most vulnerable and excluded, so that the dignity of each person is respected. We embrace a human rights framework, to ensure that all persons can live in a world of peace, justice and security.

6. Communications

Visits to our international website, Facebook and Twitter are steadily increasing. The website is in 5 languages viz French, Spanish, English, Portuguese and Chinese.

The National SSVP Websites and that of the Vincentian Family regularly take articles from our website. Bi-monthly electronic newsletters are well received by members and non-members.

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Statistics for website access indicated that proportion of users connecting from a mobile or tablet has doubled in one year and it could increase further. Under consideration is a development of a responsive version of this site with a cheaper and simpler solution. This is a fast and quick way of staying connected to our worldwide members. Dissemination of information is highly relevant to stay updated on events, information and activities of the SSVF globally.

7. Visits of the President General

In the discharge of his international duties, as one of his functions, the President General visited Bolivia, Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent and Grenadines, England, South Africa, Hong Kong and Thailand. In the course of his visits apart from meeting and addressing members, visited projects of the Society and on some occasions met up with donors viz individuals, foundations, corporations and with politicians and members of Government and the media.

8. International Meetings

The Society convened the following:

- (i) The International Executive Committee and Permanent Section meetings in Sao Paulo, Brasil, in June
- (ii) Assembly of countries in the Caribbean was held in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in June
- (iii) All Africa Assembly for over 30 countries was held in October in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- (iv) Assembly of Western European countries was held in November in Lyon, France.
- (v) East Asia Meeting of over 25 countries was held in November in Bangkok, Thailand.

Conclusion

Through the grace of God we managed to cap another year of our service in our Vincentian mission and vocation in serving Christ in the poor. As we pursue our mission as a Catholic Charity organisation the fundamental challenge is to ensure that the Christ dimension of our ethos and charisma are preserved and maintained and animated in the Love of Christ.

We know the poor, needy and vulnerable people through our person to person contact which is the main ethos and characteristic of a Vincentian. They are not faceless people. They are not just statistics in our reports. We know them as “our Friends In Need (FIN)” and it is from them that we come to know the real meaning of social exclusion, the daily struggle to survive and the meaning of

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broken commitments and unfulfilled promises. We seek to share both bread and hope with our brothers and sisters, recognising Christ in their painful predicaments and witnessing to the Good News of Justice, Compassion and Love. **“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, therefore He has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good tidings to the poor” – Lk 4.18**

We thank God for the many blessings he has showered on the members and our Society and for guiding and enlightening us in our Vincentian mission and vocation for the greater glory of God. As we serve in Faith and Love we remember the inspiring words of our beloved principal founder Blessed Frederic Ozanam : **“Let us go to the poor. Let us not only speak but act and affirm by our action the vitality of our Faith”.**

PRESIDENT GENERAL’S 10 STRATEGIC GOALS

When I was elected President General in June 2010 in Salamanca, Spain, I presented then to the General Assembly my 10 STRATEGIC GOALS that I envisaged for my team and I in CGI to achieve during the period of my Presidency so as to take the Society forward into the future with a renewed Society and mandate to meet the challenges of the times in our mission and vocation in our Vincentian apostolate in serving Christ in the poor and vulnerable people for the greater glory of God in sharing Christ’s Love, Care and Hope for them. Let us recall His words **“The least you do to my brothers, you did it to me”- Mt 25:40**

On behalf of my team I shall share with you the fruits of our labour.

Enhance the Spiritual Formation & Development of members which is fundamental to our Vincentian vocation and mission.

- Introduced and conducted training and formation programs.
- Designing curriculum and training of Lay Spiritual Advisors.
- Spiritual exercises viz Retreats, Day of Recollection, Spiritual Readings and reflection at meetings, Bible study, daily prayers and frequent attendance at mass.

Leadership and Members formation, training and development to provide for quality and enlightened leaders and members.

- Conducted training programs globally and over 3 years about 85% of National Presidents trained and they in turn cascade the training programs to their members. A very successful global training program.
- Some members attended training programs conducted by the Vincentian Family.
- Project Management Training provided.
- Universal Global Training under review and development including Trainers program.

To enhance the internationalisation of the Society as a global Catholic Charity. Extend to new countries, expand the quality and scope of the Society’s services and bring about Systemic Change.

- During the 6-year period the Society has grown its presence from 137 countries to 150 countries.

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There are 680,000 members from 49,000 conferences.

- Improved quality of Councils and Conferences in providing better care and services to our Friends-in-Need (FIN).
- Promoted and implemented Systemic Change projects in empowering and improving the lives of the FINs to become self-sufficient and enhanced the quality of their lives and their families.

Develop effective communication to promote better understanding and knowledge of the Society's works and activities internally and externally.

- New website implemented which is well managed by a webmaster and populated with information of the Society's global activities and with highlights, history, Rule & Statutes, videos, documents, manuals etc. Available in 5 languages in French, Spanish, Portuguese, English and Chinese.
- CGI has accounts for Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.
- Bimonthly Newsletter generated electronically.
- International Twinning information and with 112 National Twinning Co-ordinators.
- Information on activities, assistance and programs from the Commission for International Aid and Development(CIAD).

Focus on Youth and Young Adults in providing opportunity for active participation in the growth, leadership and well being of the Society.

- National Councils promote development and recruitment of youth and young adults.
- Young Vincentians appointment to National Councils with particular responsibility for Youth development.
- A young Vincentian appointed to the Board of CGI to promote youth development and membership internationally.
- Various international youth meetings were held in various countries.
- There is a Youth section dedicated to the Youth in the CGI website.

To be involved in greater collaboration with other branches of the Vincentian Family in mutually beneficial projects and programs for the poor and needy.

- Strong co-operation with the DCs and the CMs in many activities, projects and programs.
- Collaboration in emergency relief and reconstruction and rehabilitation programs in many countries.
- CMs and DCs as Spiritual Advisors.
- Conduct retreats, recollection days and spiritual formation programs.

Consideration to collaborate with other Catholic and Christian organisations in the work of Charity and Justice in the spirit of the Church's ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and activities.

- Collaborate with the Pontifical Council Cor Unum in addressing issues on refugees and humanitarian assistance with particular references to the Middle-East situation.
- Participated in several international Congresses and Conferences in the Vatican and presented talks and papers.
- Collaboration with other Christian groups in humanitarian assistance and programs.

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Maintain close and strong relationship with the Hierarchy as one mystical Body of Christ in the Church.

- Keep regular dialogue and close relationship and furnish them reports on our activities.
- Invite them to our activities, programs and functions.
- Cultivate a spirit of respect of the members for the hierarchy provides the foundation for harmonious reciprocal co-operation.

Evolve Strategic plan to respond and address worldwide calamities from emergency relief to rehabilitation and reconstruction of lives of the people.

- All efforts are co-ordinated and funded through CIAD and utilising the services of the Int'l Structure of ITVPs and Co-ordinators along with the local Councils and Conferences in joint management.
- Generate appeal for funds and donations.
- Project implementation

Governance within the CGI internally and externally with National Councils.

- Introduce Governance procedures and processes in CGI and local Councils and conferences.
- Financial transparency and accountability.
- Review Strategic Plan periodically.

Additional Information to supplement the above :

CIAD (Commission for International Aid and Development)

- In the last 6 years Euro 4.3 million were sent to 77 countries and for which 80% accounted for disaster relief, house reconstruction and rehabilitation projects and
- 20% for Development projects viz vocational training, agriculture and farm development, fish industry, self-help projects, microfinancing etc.

Finances

- Our Reserves grew from €392,000 in 2010 to €1,129,045 in 2015
- Our average Annual Income is about €1,100,000 and the 18 Concordat countries contribution attributes to about 93% of the Income.
- Our average Annual Expenditure is about €880,000

International Structure

- There are 11 Vincentian regions with 11 ITVPs, 36 Co-ordinators and a Int'l VP for the Structure with a total of 48 people (in 2010 we had only 7 Vincentian regions with 7 ITVPs and 21 Co-ordinators).
- Serving in other CGI groups are the Board members and various Commissions members from the Rule & Statutes, Communication & IT, Training and Formation, CIAD, Twinning, Int'l Finance & Accountability, Canonisation, Youth, UN and Special Delegation made up of 33 people.
- Total Vincentians serving in the CGI International Structure are 81 people.

Hall of Heroes

Blessed Frederic Ozanam was inducted into the Hall of Heroes by the Fernstein Institute for Public

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Service of Providence College in Rhodes Island, USA. Past inductees were Blessed Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Oscar Romero etc. It was a great honour for the Society.

International Visits by the President General

In the discharge of his duties as one of his functions the President General visited a total of 50 countries during his term.

United Nations

The Society was admitted as an accredited UN NGO with Consultancy status under the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in June 2012. We have representatives in the UN in New York, Geneva and UNESCO in Paris.

Conclusion

As we commit ourselves faithfully and lovingly to His call, we are engaging in the service of Christ in the poor and needy in living out the Gospel values of **Faith, Hope, Charity and Love**. In championing the cause of the poor, Christian actions and virtues are being promoted and we bear witness to Christ.

As Christians and Vincentians, we must preserve and grow in our spirituality to keep that Closeness, Love and Peace with Christ. The way we lead a good Christian life will draw people closer to God and bring about conversion and evangelisation through witnessing to the goodness and Love of Christ.

Through the grace of God I am very pleased for all that have been achieved during my term with my entire CGI team who serve with me in the international structure and the staff and it was tremendous effort, time, commitment, perseverance and co-operation with lots of prayers particularly during the difficult times but subsequently it comes with fulfilment, joy and peace. I am very grateful and thank them for their invaluable contribution, support, solidarity and love.

We praise and thank the Lord for guiding, enlightening and blessing the Society and her members in our mission and vocation in our Vincentian apostolate. **“May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face shine upon us” – Ps 67:1**

D. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT FROM SECRETARY GENERAL, Julien Spiewak

Julien Spiewak, Secretary General, presented his administrative report for 2014.

A booklet, written in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, summarising the work of the International Council General over the last six years, was distributed to the participants. The electronic format of this booklet is available on a USB stick.

○ *Website and communications*

The number of international visitors to our website is rising, as it is now available in 5 languages: English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Mandarin. New articles and documents are added regularly; international documentation is available there for download: the Rule, Twinnage manual, newsletters. We are looking at creating a version of the website suitable for mobile devices. Our communications strategy is also looking at greater visibility for the SSVP on the various social networks, particularly Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. A leaflet in four languages has been printed and distributed to introduce the SSVP and the International Council General more effectively.

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- International aid

Many projects have been funded, especially through our International Commission for Aid and Development (CIAD).

- Training

An international team visited the head office for a study session, with the task of drawing up and presenting a global, universal training programme, a common basis for the Society's members through all its entities, intended for all Vincentians, now and in future. This global training course is divided into several modules and will be distributed from 2016 onwards.

- Work of the employees' team

A smaller team (7 people) administers the head office and coordination for international projects.

Following changes in French employment law, H  l  ne Afriat, webmaster, has increased her working hours from 17.5 to 24 hours a week, from February.

We have worked to develop and set up an information system that will make it easier for us to help the international structure in coordinating its activities.

- Maintenance of Head Office

Major works were undertaken this year, on the one hand, to bring our fire and intruder alarms up to standard, and to install a secure locking system on the front door. And in addition, our main electrical cabinet was completely obsolete and was replaced, for everyone's safety and to meet current regulatory requirements.

It took a while for the building to dry out after the leaks caused by an obsolescent frame; so we have to wait a while before carrying out renovation work in the rooms affected.

- External relations

The head office regularly welcomes groups of pilgrims.

- Membership and Aggregations

Growth in membership and the number of conference aggregations is one of the essential tools for measuring the health of our association. We therefore insist that national or superior Councils ensure that the information they send to CGI is reliable, and that it is sent as quickly as possible.

We have redesigned the aggregation request form to suit local needs, and to respond to the new requirements of Council General, especially regarding centralisation of data about the Society around the world.

During 2015, we aggregated 474 conferences in 27 different countries (including 99 in India, 65 in Zambia, 60 in the United States, and so on), and 19 zone councils (in India, the United States, Brazil, Portugal, Haiti and Peru, etc.). This work shows the vitality of our association.

Many countries are late in producing their own internal statutes. Since the reform and the new Rule of 2003, the countries have to submit their statutes for approval by the CGI; these are examined to ensure they comply with the International Rule. They are approved by the Assembly. If some countries wish to obtain a model copy of the statutes to help them produce their own, they can write to the CGI head office in Paris, France.

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This year, the statutes submitted by Venezuela fulfil all the criteria for adoption. Do you agree?
General approval.

Thank you, the Internal Statutes for Venezuela are declared to be approved.

E. FINANCIAL REPORT FROM THE GENERAL TREASURER FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2015, Liam Fitzpatrick

RECEIPTS AND EXPENSES:

The financial outcome for year 2015 was, once again, very favourable, with receipts exceeding expenses by €294k versus a budgeted surplus of €80k.

RECEIPTS:

Total Income reached €1,147k. - €21,600 better than budget.

The main variation was in Contributions which exceeded budget by €30k.

As in previous years, our heartfelt thanks are due to all our member countries who contributed but especially to the Concordat countries from whom we received a record amount of €1,060k.

Our investment income dropped from a very high figure of €55k. in 2014 to €32k, reflecting particularly large maturities in 2014 and more emphasis on Bank deposits in 2015, for conservative reasons.

The rental income from the top floor of our Paris office remained steady at €20k.

EXPENSES:

Our total expenses in 2015, at €853k, were significantly lower than for any other year of the current Council.

Contributing to this situation where:

- Sizeable reduction in Personnel costs at Paris office, following reorganisation in 2014.
- Cost of meetings, including Sao Paulo, coming in at less than budget.
- Savings in General costs of Paris office.
- Some programmes planned for 2015 (e.g. training and international structure) not proceeding.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31ST 2015.:

Our Balance Sheet shows an increasingly very satisfactory position, reflecting the favourable results for the year 2015 and previous years.

Our General Reserves are now in excess of €1.1m. and our cash/Bank, deposits and investments total €5.4m. These give us ample resources to meet our Dedicated Funds of €3.9m, which exist to provide for specific needs, including statutory Personnel provisions and funds collected for international aid, and-there is also more than sufficient to meet the ongoing requirements of CGI.

Liam Fitzpatrick then read the auditor's report.

Final budget 2016:

We predicted a drop of 10 k€ on our investment income, and we have reduced costs by 44 k€. We therefore expect a final surplus of 160 k€, instead of 126 k€.

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Contributions:

We have received more than 100% of the committed contributions from Concordat countries. Malaysia paid 146% of its commitment for its first year. South Africa is the 18th member to join the Concordat.

CGI financial report for this term of office:

We have made much progress since 2008, the date when the general reserves were 22 k€, with a deficit of 120 k€ for the staff reserve fund.

The Concordat was signed in 2008, and has been twice renewed. The idea was that a country would make a commitment for three years to pay CGI 0.3% of its free income each year. This commitment has transformed our revenue.

Similarly, a new management accounts system was implemented in 2010/2011.

We now have five cost centre with over 30 lines. The budget is voted on every year, and monitored by IFAC, the International Finance and Accounting Commission.

The management accounts are presented to the board three times a year, showing current/budget figures.

This means that the CGI accounts have been showing a positive trend for 6 years now, with a current surplus of 1.2 m€.

We leave the next council a healthy financial situation.

Profile of the SSVP around the world:

150 countries are known to have Vincentian involvement. We have surveyed them, and 102 have replied; some of them in an incomplete fashion.

102 countries represent 70% of the countries, but include 95% of conferences and 95% of our members.

Countries have costs of 829 m€ and income of 708 m€.

6 countries have costs of over 10m€ = 94% of the total

The 18 countries of the Concordat have costs of 811m€ = 98% of costs.

The remaining 84 countries only cover 2% of the costs.

32 countries have costs of under 10k€.

55 countries have costs of under 30k€.

68 countries have costs of under 100k€

These figures show that there is a huge gap between “strong” and “weak” countries. This observation underpins the principle of the Concordat: a small number of countries can have a big impact on many other weaker countries.

More global data could provide material for further strategic reflection.

CONCLUDING COMMENT:

Our success in building the financial strength of CGI is due to two prime factors:

1 - the ever-present generous support of Member countries, especially the countries which have joined in the Concordat.

2 – the approach of the Management and Staff at Paris office and of the volunteer members of CGI towards the effective use of our resources.

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On behalf of CGI, may I extend our heartfelt and warm gratitude to everyone who contributed to our current happy situation.

In terms of both the income and costs, our members have shown the value to be gained by working towards a common purpose.

In the spirit of our Founder, let us continue to work in unison so that the poor whom we serve will be able to see more clearly, and benefit more readily from, the fruit of our combined labours.

F. VOTE ON RESOLUTIONS

1 – The General Assembly approved the reports of the President General and Secretary General.

(proposed by Jean-Noël Cormier, Canada and seconded by Michael Nizankiewicz, United States)

2 – Having heard the reports of the General Treasurer and the Auditor, the General Assembly approved the financial report for the financial year 2015.

(proposed by Geoff Meagher, Ireland and seconded by Johnson Varghèse, India)

3 – The Assembly gave its approval to the President General, the Secretary General and the Treasurer General for their management during 2015.

(proposed by Jean-Noël Cormier, Canada and seconded by Graham West, Australia)

4 – The General Assembly approved the budget for 2016

(proposed by Clement Venter, South Africa and seconded by Geoff Meagher, Ireland)

All resolutions were passed unanimously.

G. ELECTION OF 16th PRESIDENT GENERAL, chaired by Vice-President General, Brian O'Reilly

After Eduardo Marques withdrew, there were two candidates in the running: Maria Geralda Ferreira and Renato Lima de Oliveira, both from Brazil.

Electoral procedure.

The election was held on Sunday 5 June 2016, at 2.30pm in the Casa tra Noi Hotel, Rome, Italy.

As there was well in excess of the quorum of 30% of the 138 members with the right to vote present, the Assembly was declared validly constituted.

The Electoral Board consisted of its chairman, Vice-President General Brian O'Reilly, assisted by the Secretary General Julien Spiewak and the Treasurer General Liam Fitzpatrick.

The ballot began with the recording of the postal votes received. After announcing each postal vote, the chairman placed the voting paper in the ballot box.

38 countries voted by post, and all 38 votes were accepted.

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The Vice- President General then called on the countries given proxy votes. 12 proxies came forward, and as all were in order, they were allowed to vote.

The Secretary General then called the National Presidents in the hall to place their envelope into the ballot box.

The Vice-President General emptied the box, and the voting papers were counted: 117 valid voting slips, 117 votes expressed.

The Vice-President General then opened the voting papers, showing each one to the assembly, for complete transparency. Two voting papers were declared void.

After counting of the 115 remaining votes, the Vice-President General declared the result:

- Maria Geralda Ferreira 45 votes
- Renato Lima de Oliveira 70 votes

Renato Lima de Oliveira was elected 16th President General of the International Confederation. Applaud.

The Vice-President General called on the newly-elected XVI President General to join him on the stage and asked him officially if he accepted the appointment. He did accept.

H. TALKS

Refugees, migrations, geopolitical situation in Lebanon, spiritual reflexion about hope and service... These topics were discussed during the General Assembly in Rome , presented by four qualified speakers from all around the world, were interesting and relevant to question our relations to those who are "strangers", poor and vulnerable people to us. Find the entire content of the topics below :

- Gushwell Brooks (South Africa). *Communication officer at the Jesuite Refugee Service*. Topic : « International migrations and international refugee law" »
- Ella Bitar (Lebanon). *National President of the SSVp in Lebanon*. Topic : « 1,5 millions of refugees on 4 millions of habitants : Lebanon is dying ».
- Sister Marie Raw (England). *General Counsellor of the Daughter of Charity '* Topic : « Turning hope into service »
- Father Gregory Gay (United States). *Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission*. Topic - : « I was a stranger and you welcomed me »

The texts of the talks are available at the website [ssvpglobal.org](http://en.ssvpglobal.org):

<http://en.ssvpglobal.org/News/CGI-news/Main-topics-and-conferences-during-the-General-Assembly-2016>

I. PRESENTATION OF GLOBAL TRAINING and TRAINING FOR SPIRITUAL ADVISERS

Global training for all members (2015 onwards)

The aim here was to give all members of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul around the world an identical message on the basics of the Society. Council General used the experience of some countries already advanced in this area (Brazil, England & Wales, Italy, Ireland, United States, Canada and France) to develop a universal programme. A working group formed of representatives of these

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countries was formed and met from 2 to 5 February 2015. Together they agreed on the type of presentation (Powerpoint) and the topics to be covered. They chose two separate programmes:

a) A GENERAL PROGRAMME with the following modules:

1. General presentation
2. History/Origins
3. Spirituality
4. Systemic change:
5. Visiting those in need
6. The Rule
7. Conference life
8. Vincentian solidarity (special works, projects, twinning)
9. Youth
10. Relations with international organisations and with the Church

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- b) A SPECIFIC PROGRAMME FOR CONFERENCE OFFICERS (President, Treasurer, Secretary) with the modules:
1. Servant-leaders: training a team, knowing how to delegate, succession planning
 2. How to lead a meeting: chairing, decision-making, best use of skills
 3. Roles and responsibilities: recruitment, fund-raising, elections

After the meeting, each participant was given a topic to cover and send back to Council General according to a specified deadline.

The presentations created by the participants were then carefully studied, revised and commented on by Marie-Françoise Salésiani-Payet, International Vice-President for Training, and her team. These were used as basis for the powerpoints in their present form, using the main ideas supplemented by important points taken from the Rule as applicable.

In general, the purpose of the global training programme is to address the largest number of people possible, introducing them to, or reminding them of, the spirit, traditions and spirituality, in fact, the Rule of the Society. It seeks to show the current situation of the Society. The response given by Ozanam and his companions to a world divided between the haves and have-nots does not rely simply on methods; it involves a personal conversion and the gift each one makes of him or herself to those in most need.

A professional graphic designer was given the task of creating a presentation and a visual chart for instant identification of Council General training.

The global training programme is now available in 4 languages: English, French, Portuguese, Spanish.

This programme is currently available on the Council General's website:

<http://en.ssvpglobal.org/News/CGI-news/Global-training-modules-online>

Training for Spiritual advisers (2015 onwards)

Sister Maureen McGuire, DC, Spiritual adviser to the Board of Council General, and author of the programme, reminded - us what the Rule says: *"Members of the Society are united in the same spirit of poverty and of sharing. They encourage one another to live a profound spiritual life and spirit of prayer. For this purpose, the role of a Spiritual Adviser is very important."* (Rule 1, 3.13). This training programme is addressed to lay spiritual advisers. It may also be useful for priests and religious, however. There are 2 modules:

- Module 1: description of the role of the Spiritual adviser, the requirements and skills linked to this mission, and the responsibilities involved.
- Module 2: the meaning of spirituality, and of spirituality in our Society, how to lead prayer and spiritual formation (examples and documents).

This programme has not yet been translated.

J. CHANGES TO STATUTES

During the General Assembly of the Confederation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul held on 7 June 2016 in Rome, the following New or Changed Statues were approved:

- A. International Statute 1.1.2: (New second paragraph)**
The Society has the sole right to decide its work, its priorities and the way the work is undertaken, the management of its projects, Conferences and Councils, its choice of

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Officers, its organisational structures and the formation and training of its members and Officers. It has the sole right to manage and distribute its funds and assets.

- B.** International Statute 3.1: (New second paragraph)
The President General sends, on behalf of Council General International, an Annual Report to the Holy See, summarising the Society's key activities and financial report for the previous year. A sign of ecclesial communion, the report is for information.
- C.** International Statute 3.4: (Changed wording)
The term of office of the President General is limited to one term of six years only.
- D.** Basic Requirement - B.R. 3.1: (New second paragraph)
In the event of the dissolution of a Conference or Council, all debts and liabilities legally incurred by and on behalf of the Conference or Council shall be fully discharged by the next higher Council of the Society. Remaining money or property and all files and documents must be passed promptly to the next higher Council.
- E.** Basic Requirement – B.R. 11: (New fifth paragraph)
After nominations have been declared, canvassing on behalf of a candidate or against a candidate is forbidden.
- F.** Basic Requirement – B.R. 13: (New third and fourth paragraphs)
If a parish priest who has declined to be the usual Spiritual Advisor does occasionally attend a Conference meeting, he will always be invited by the President to contribute to the sharing during the Spiritual Reading or Reflection.

In a parish, the parish priest is usually asked to be the Spiritual Advisor and, if he declines, it would be prudent to consult him about who may undertake the role. At Council level, although chosen by the Council President, the Spiritual Advisor must obtain agreement from his or her ecclesiastical superior.
- G.** Basic Requirement – B.R. 18: (Add new sentence to current fourth paragraph)
An annual report by a National Council should also be sent to Council General.
- H.** Basic Requirement – B.R. 19: (New fourth paragraph)
Respecting the wishes of donors: "Offerings given by the faithful for a certain purpose can be applied only for that same purpose." (IEN Art. 10.2). The Society will take all reasonable steps to respect the wishes of donors.

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The above amendments would take effect from 7 June 2016 the date on which the General Assembly approved the amendments and these amendments would be noted and notified to members.

Discussion on Private Canonical Juridical Personality status

Members discussed in some depth the matter of the Private Canonical Juridical Personality for the consideration of the Confederation. Some countries have requested more time to review, reflect and discern on the subject. Arising from this, the members in the General Assembly have consented and agreed that this matter be further deliberated and a decision on this be deferred to the year 2018.

Under the circumstances, the XVI President General-elect would be considering setting up a Commission to follow up on this matter. Council General International would keep members informed of developments.

K. INVESTITURE CEREMONY AND SPEECH

Vincentian Promise.

On Tuesday 7 June 2016, in the presence of Father Gregory Gay, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, the members of the Electoral Board and the General Assembly, the newly elected XVI President-General took his pledge of office upon a Bible.

Brian O'Reilly, Vice-President General expressed the warm gratitude of the CGI Board to Dr. Michael Thio, President General, for his excellent leadership as follows;

Rev Fathers, Rev Sisters and Fellow Vincentians,

As we near the end of this General Assembly it is not a time to feel sad – this is the time for all of us to Celebrate.

To Celebrate the Election of our new President-General who will lead this great Society over the coming 6 years.

To Celebrate the debate on the changes to our Rule – a debate that was carried out in true Vincentian spirit without rancour or hostility but with sincere passion and objectivity.

To Celebrate the agreed changes that will now be incorporated into The Rule; a Rule that has served us well since 2003. And will continue to do so.

To Celebrate the leadership of Dr. Michael Thio our President-General, who over the past 6 years has given clear direction and inspirational guidance to this Confederation.

Our Patron St Vincent de Paul was convinced of the value of prayer:

“Give me a praying man and he will be able to do anything” (Coste XI, 83; CEME XI, 778).

We were blessed in that Michael is, and continues to be a man of prayer.

Michael often spoke about our 5 Vincentian Virtues of simplicity, humility, meekness, passion and holiness. In Michael we have a President-General who not only embraced these virtues but lived them out to the full in his daily life. To Michael, Christ the Evangelizer of the Poor is and remains at

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the heart of our Vincentian vision and spirituality; and the five virtues supported him in his efforts to live out this vision and spirituality.

Michael was a perfect role model for all Vincentians.

To us on the Board of Council General International (CGI) who worked closely with Michael we celebrate the leadership and friendship of a President General who exercised at all times good leadership and good judgement. He was one who was able to balance dignity and passion: a person of great passion and dedication.

He cared about the future but did not fear it; never letting the past take control.

He was an effective leader in that he never expected more from his team than they did themselves. A person who encouraged others to be the best they can be. And while the responsibilities and roles of a President General may be different, Michael was always seen to be part of the CGI team. Through all the storms, emotions, and crises of the past 6 years and there were many, Michael took these as part of the journey and always kept a cool head remaining calm and steadfast.

In Michael we have a President-General who was enthusiastic about his work and Mission; he was a source of inspiration and also a great motivator.

Finally, it is of paramount importance that a leader is trustworthy to lead others. A leader needs to be trusted and be known to live their life with honesty and integrity.

True authority is born from respect for the good character and trustworthiness of the person who leads.

And we Celebrate and acknowledge that we were blessed with such a person in Michael Thio.

Presentation of gifts took place; Dr. Michael Thio, very moved, made his response.

I reiterate my appreciation and gratitude to my entire team consisting of the CGI Board, members serving in the various International Structure and the staff who journeyed with me during my 6-year term for their utmost commitment, passion and efficiency and the tremendous time and effort they extended to their tasks and duties. They were all excellent. We are a very joyful, caring and co-operative team. We are very pleased for all that have been achieved and have brought the Society to greater heights and put it on a very sound footing internationally. I also thank all the Vincentians globally for your solidarity and support extended to me and CGI. We praise and thank the Lord.

Then the XVI President General-elect gave his first official speech.

<http://en.ssvpglobal.org/News/CGI-news/General-Assembly-the-countries-members-of-the-Confederation-met-in-Rome-Italie>

L. CLOSE OF MEETING

President General, Dr. Michael Thio, closed this General Assembly by thanking God for the success of the meeting, and thanking all those who attended for their fine participation and contribution over the past few days. They had been guided by the Holy Spirit. Thank you all for attending, and for your Vincentian spirituality, solidarity and collaboration. We pray for the XVI President General-elect and his forthcoming new team, and may the Holy Spirit guide and enlighten him in his leadership of

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the Society. Dr. Thio wished everyone an enjoyable end to their visit to Rome, and a safe journey home, and "May God bless you".

The meeting closed with a prayer.



Julien Spiewak
Secrétaire Général



Dr. Michael Thio
Président Général