



Indian Association, Geneva

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting of Indian Association Geneva (IAG)**

**Held on 03 February 2018 at Quakers Hall, Geneva**

The 2018 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Indian Association Geneva was opened at 5:30pm. Since the quorum of 30 members was not present, as per the Constitution the AGM was reconvened after a lapse of 15 minutes with the 19 members who were present.

The IAG President Mr. Maneesh Wadhwa welcomed the participants and requested a member to Chair the AGM meeting, as required by the Constitution rules of procedure for the meetings of the AGM. Mr. Maneesh Wadhwa proposed Mr. Rajagopalan Sampatkumar to Chair the AGM. This was seconded by all the members attending the General Assembly. Mr. Rajagopalan Sampatkumar kindly agreed to Chair (referred as Chairperson in the minutes) the meeting.

Following his welcoming remarks, the following agenda as proposed in the invitation letter was adopted:

1. [Approval of minutes of AGM held on 26 February 2017](#)
2. [Consider and adopt the Newsletter providing detailed report.](#)
3. [Consider and adopt the audited statement of accounts for 2017](#)
4. [Nomination of Auditor](#)
5. Fix annual membership dues
6. Any other business.
  - Mr. Anil Sinha added an additional item for discussion – What else can we do as an Association?

**1. Approval of minutes of AGM held on 26 February 2017**

Mr. Ravindra Chopra remarked that his suggestion in the last year's AGM is not correctly reflected that Permanent Mission of India (PMI) is a very important institution and it is their prerogative to organize the national days on 26 January and 15 August.

The Chairperson agreed and proposed that a sentence to that effect be inserted in the minutes.

Mrs. Usha Lad and Mr. Anil Sinha seconded and the minutes of AGM held on 26 February was adopted as amended.

## **2. Consider and adopt the Newsletter providing detailed report**

The Chairperson asked for comments and questions on the Newsletter.

Mr. Ravindra Chopra appreciated the new IT system put in place and congratulated IAG President Mr. Maneesh Wadhwa and his team for their efforts to modernize IAG Member and Event Management System.

The Chairperson pointed out that an Annual Report for the year 2017 should have been presented for approval instead of the Newsletter as it is required by the constitution. Also a discussion took place to decide whether this Newsletter can be taken as Annual Report as the content was in line of the Annual report and it was practically the same. It was therefore suggested to rename the newsletter to Annual report, this would also avoid delays and reconvening of AGM to approve the Annual Report as will be required.

There was a discussion about removing the future event dates as the Annual report was meant to only report about the past year, which was seconded by Mrs Usha Lad and Mr. Venkatraman Narasimhan.

Mrs. Usha Lad mentioned that the Annual Report should contain last year's achievement and not the future events dates.

Mr. Nakshatra Pachauri however pointed out that Annual Report can also contain the future direction/plan of the Association and it is important that a plan of action is needed and shown.

Mr. Maneesh Wadhwa also mentioned that this is also an attempt to reduce the number of communication to the members by providing maximum information possible in one email/newsletter.

Mrs. Usha Lad raised the concern that if we provide the event dates then the members feels dictated by the IAG committee to follow the dates provided. This concern was clarified by Mr. Ravindra Chopra that it is IAG committee's job to set the dates.

Mr. Sameer Pujari also mentioned that the event dates for the year are set so early because of many practical reasons and in the past members have asked and appreciated the early information of the event dates. These dates are set after coordinating with other events taking place in Geneva and also the availability of halls.

Mr. Ravindra Chopra also suggested that we should consider this Newsletter as Annual Report 2017 without any change and was seconded by Mr. Anil Sinha as well.

Mr. Venkatraman Narasimhan pointed out that he had provided a detailed report of Grant-in-aid from the Indian Embassy in Bern to the President Mr. Maneesh Wadhwa. The grant in question used to come from Bern and this time it was given by PMI Geneva. Why is it now called « Sponsorship » in the audit statement?

The Chairperson agreed that he also noticed but will discuss this topic with the audit report.

Mr. Maneesh Wadhwa explained the situation that he had followed up with Indian Embassy at Bern for Grant-in-aid. Embassy has informed that due to some administrative difficulties, it is still under process. They will revert to us as soon as possible on receiving a reply from Delhi. In the meantime, Mr. Maneesh Wadhwa discussed the matter with H.E. Ambassador, Mr. Rajiv Kumar Chandar, PMI Geneva. H.E. Ambassador agreed to support IAG and the amount in question (CHF6000) received from PMI Geneva.

CG Mr. Shaibal Roy Chaudhury who was present in the meeting confirmed that this amount should be considered as a « contribution » from PMI rather sponsorship.

Mr. Ravindra Chopra advised that this should be clearly stated in the accounts that it is a contribution from PMI and not a sponsorship.

The Chairperson suggested Grant-in-aid and contribution topic has been well addressed and should be documented in the minutes.

Mr. Anil Sinha suggested that it should now be adopted with the suggestions from the Chairperson.

The Annual Report with the proposed amendments, was seconded by Mr. Narasimhan and adopted.

### **3. Consider and adopt the audited statement of accounts for 2017**

The Chairperson appreciated that the accounts were shown in a manner that was requested in the previous AGM.

Mr. Venkatraman Narasimhan pointed out that in the last AGM the interim audit was requested and asked why it was not provided ?

Mr. Sameer Pujari mentioned that he had discussed this point with the Auditor and it was agreed between them that given the size of the accounts and transactions and the nature of the events, it is not advisable to have an interim audit also since there were no financial flags.

Further, doing an interim audit is resource and time intensive for both the auditor and the committee. In addition to this the constitution provides for strong checks to avoid any wrong doings. It was therefore suggested to agree that the interim audits are not necessary and that these be done only if there are some major funding gaps or negative balances foreseen.

Mr Ravindra Chopra agreed and pointed out that there are enough checks in place in the constitution that abuse of funds is not possible so it is not required to have the interim audit.

Mr. Maneesh Wadhwa mentioned that as per constitution, the Committee is allowed only to use collected funds during the financial year. In case major funding gaps or negative balance, the reserve can be used only with approval from extraordinary AGM.

Mr Anil Sinha questioned why the interim audit is required and if there were any wrong doings? Unless we have reason to suspect we should do away with interim audit.

The Chairperson explained the unfortunate event that took place many years ago with the financial commitments made by the Committee far beyond the available annual income and said that we do not see any such event happening in the future so we should stay with annual audit report. It was unanimously agreed that unless there are some exceptional financial circumstances for which the Committee is responsible to point out to the member well in time. AGM decided that the Committee decision to not do an interim audit was practical and hence to revise the decision that only annual audit is required henceforth.

The Chairperson asked for explanation on special events and type of sponsors and the reasons behind the nomenclature. It was clarified that the special events such as support to Namaste Geneva and professional Bharatanatyam were special events organized by the committee to promote Indian culture and cater to various age and interest groups of members. Whereas, information of type of sponsors is well documented and available of IAG website.

The elected Auditor, Mr. Adhivarahan Krishnavarahan, was relocated from Geneva and hence submitted his resignation. He also presented a note suggesting the appointment of an interim auditor which was discussed.- It was pointed out by Mr. Venkatraman Narasimhan and the Chairperson that the constitution is not clear on how to go about with the appointment of an interim auditor in case a vacancy arises because the Auditor is not able to complete his/her term. Therefore, appropriate amendments to the Constitution/Rules of procedure should be considered.

Seconded by Mr. Venkatraman Narasimhan and Mr. Anil Sinha, the audited statements were adopted,

#### **4. Nomination of Auditor**

The previous auditor Mr. Krishnavarahan had to leave mid-term, however to fulfil his commitment he completed the audit by reviewing the accounts himself remotely and using the assistance of Mr. Nakshatra Pachauri as field auditor. The committee thanked Mr Pachauri for agreeing to help IAG in this role. The audit report was signed by both auditors. to ensure compliance of all rules and procedures.

Mr. Nakshatra Pachauri is being proposed for the auditor as he has now already been on the job a.i.

The Chairperson called on other nominations and since there were no other nominations presented, asked for any objections/support to the appointment of Mr. Nakshatra Pachauri for the new auditor for IAG , there were no objections and the appointment was seconded by everyone.

#### **5. Fix annual membership dues**

As it was discussed during last AGM to not increase the membership fees, Mr. Maneesh Wadhwa proposed that maybe we should start thinking in the direction of increasing the membership fees.

Some members pointed out that committee should outline the rationale and purpose for the increase?

Mr. Maneesh Wadhwa mentioned that in order to improve the quality of events i.e. having professional artist from India promoting our culture, the budget is quite limited. Mr. Sameer Pujari, highlighted one of the main concerns to be very delayed membership payments.

The Chairperson suggested that vision of the association should be provided to justify the increase in the membership fees.

Further, it was discussed how we can improve membership fee payment procedure and avoid multiple reminders.

It was agreed that the last date of payment of annual membership fees will be 31 March and thereafter a penalty of CHF 10 will be charged.

The Chairperson strongly agreed that these steps should be taken and that the Committee should send a reminder by 1 March to remind the Members of the last date for the payment of annual membership fees. Defaulting member's name will be removed from the following Membership Directory.

## 6. Any Other Business

Mr. Anil Sinha asked if the Association can provide additional services e.g. engaging with Government of India or representatives of India at UN to address matters (e.g. help in employment, etc.) related to Indian diaspora living in Geneva and around. The Chairperson clarified that the Association does not have the mandate and requested Mr. Anil Sinha to provide written proposals to the committee which could be the basis for further discussion.

Mr. Anil Sinha asked if Association should ask members what do they expect?

Mr. Maneesh Wadhwa explained that in our communication, we always request our members to come forward and share their thoughts on what we can do better and welcome them to contribute on volunteer basis. This is an on-going challenge, nevertheless last year we were very pleased with 4 students studying in Geneva volunteered their support throughout the year. We will continue our efforts and look forward to improving our association.

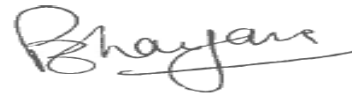
Mr. Ravindra Chopra questioned what does the date of joining mean that is on the website. It was explained that it is error in the system so please ignore and it is not the actual date of becoming a member.

Mr. Maneesh Wadhwa thanked Mr. Rajagopalan Sampatkumar for chairing the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 8:00 pm.



Mr. Rajagopalan Sampatkumar  
*AGM Chairperson, IAG*



Mrs. Pankaj Bhayana  
*Secretary, IAG*