



Indian Association, Geneva

***Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Indian Association Geneva (IAG)  
Held on Saturday, 02 February 2019 at Quakers Hall, Geneva.***

The 2019 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Indian Association Geneva opened at 17.30. Since a quorum of 30 members was required as per the constitution of the IAG, the meeting was delayed as only 17 members were present. The meeting reconvened after a lapse of ten minutes.

The IAG President Dr. Maneesh Wadhwa welcomed the participants and requested a member to Chair the AGM meeting, as required by the Constitution rules of procedure. The President proposed Mr. Rajagopalan Sampatkumar to Chair the AGM, which 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.

After the Chairpersons welcome remarks, the following agenda, which was proposed in the invitation letter was adopted.

1. Approval of minutes of AGM held on 3 February 2018.
2. Consider and adopt the Newsletter providing detailed report.
3. Consider and adopt the audited statement of accounts for 2018
4. Consider for approval of New Executive Committee
5. Handing over to the New Executive Committee
6. Nomination of Auditor
7. Fix annual membership dues
8. Any other business.

**1. Approval of minutes of AGM held on 3 February 2018**

The Chair enquired if there were any suggestions or comments with regard to the minutes of the AGM held on 3 February 2018. Since there were no comments/suggestions and remarks the minutes of AGM were adopted.

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

The Chair invited the President, Dr. Wadhwa to present the annual report. The President briefly talked about the activities organized by the IAG during 2018.

In 2018, the IAG organized in a total of 18 events. Besides this, it also supported events promoting Indian heritage and cultural tradition by Indian artist living in and around Geneva such as Aalap, JALA – The Dance of Water, Festival of India in Switzerland

The highlights of the year were new series of talks by eminent persons on the theme of “Values and Modernity”, Bollywood Gala Night event and the Namaste Geneva event organized in collaboration with Permanent Mission of India (PMI).

Dr. Wadhwa thanked H.E. Rajiv Kumar Chander, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the UN in Geneva, and the Counsel General Mr. Shaibal Roy Chowdhury for their support and in taking the IAG forward. He also thanked them for the monetary support of the PMI to the IAG.

He also thanked the Indian Embassy in Bern for giving the IAG a grant-in-aid of Rs. 2 lakhs. IAG received this grant-in-aid after a gap of more than 4 years.

The IAG also raised funds for the Kerala Floods. An amount of CHF1,820 was collected from the members and IAG committee contributed CHF 780. In total an amount of CHF2,600 was transferred to the Chief Minister’s Distress Relief Fund in Kerala.

Dr. Wadhwa thanked all the sponsors. He stated that the overall budget is not sufficient to run the association. However, the support from the sponsors is highly appreciated.

Two years ago, the IAG took a mandate to digitalise the Association. We have been very successful to provide seamless experience to our members. More than 95% of the members pay membership online and almost 100% event bookings including dinner reservations are done through the IAG website or App. Digital transformation facilitates hassle free organization of events and there’s less wastage of food.

With these remarks Mr. Wadhwa concluded the report.

The Chairperson asked for comments and questions on the Annual Report.

Mr. Nooh Shamsie appreciated the new IT system put in place and congratulated the IAG President, Dr. Wadhwa and his team for their efforts to modernize IAG Member and Event Management System in a short period.

Mr. Sameer Pujari, the Treasurer requested the members to provide feedback on how the functioning of the Association can be improved.

Ms. Ena Singh enquired whether the IAG committee expects ad hoc or an email comments or a brain storming session once a year. She suggested that it would be good for the IAG to consider if people can come together as a group once in 6 months, as generally people are a bit hesitant to send individual emails.

Dr. Wadhwa welcomed the suggestion. He responded that the IAG wishes to engage more with the IAG Members, Indian diaspora and friends of India who are really interested and wish to take ownership to bring forward the new activities and increase the network. He proposed that the members get in touch with the Committee and then a group can be formed. The AGM is also an important event where people can give their feedback.

Mr. Raj Kumar suggested that we make the IAG membership directory available online to save money on printing and distribution. Mr. Pujari responded that the IAG members have always expressed interest in receiving a hard copy of the membership directory. The challenge of putting the directory online is the privacy issue as the website is open to everyone. The Chair responded that it is better to have a hard copy as it is easy for reference purposes. More importantly it is also a way of thanking the sponsors for their advertisements.

Mr. Sameer said that when the IAG members renew their membership, we can add a field in the app and ask them if they wish to receive a hard copy of the directory. Mr Wadhwa proposed that a survey be conducted to enquire how many people wish to receive a hard copy of the directory. Based on the response from the survey, a decision can be made.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Raj Kumar for the suggestion and requested the ExCom to look into the possibilities as we should be open to new ideas and see what can happen subsequently and report back to the AGM next year.

The Chairperson commended Dr. Wadhwa for preparing an excellent report both in terms of its content and in terms of what it conveys. He also congratulated the ExCom in its efforts to digitalise IAG through the mobile app.

The Chairperson said that there was a breakthrough last year regarding the grant in aid from the Govt of India. He thanked Mr. Narasimhan for his persistence in raising this issue in each of the AGM meetings. He thanked the IAG Committee for pursuing it and finally reinstating the grant in aid from the Government of India. There is also a contribution from the Indian Mission in Geneva for the second consecutive year, he said that we hope that we will continue to receive the contribution in the future as well.

The Chair was glad to note that there was an excess of income over expenditure last year. He added that this is also in line with the constitutional regulation that the Committee is not allowed to spend more than what they earn in a particular year. He thanked the ExCom for the excellent work that they had done. The Chair proposed the Annual report to be adopted. Mr. Nooh Shamsie seconded it. The report was adopted.

### ***3. Consider and adopt the audited statement of accounts for 2018***

The Chairperson invited the treasurer, Mr. Pujari to present the report.

Mr. Pujari said that as per the AGM's recommendations 2 years ago, the treasurer and the auditor included comparison figures in the report.

Last year we had a savings of CHF 9,500, income over expenditure. As we had gone digital we have added a new line in the report.

We did not spend from the reserves and the reserves continue to grow.

There is a fixed savings at the UBS of CHF 25,000 which continues to grow.

There is also a savings of CHF14,000 and we would like to discuss how this amount could be used for the future.

The auditor suggested that for quite a few years mixed accounting procedures were being applied. In future only one set of accounting principle should be applied as decided by the AGM.

He added that the investment of CHF 25,000 will be maturing next year in April. He proposed that one of the agenda items which could be discussed at the AGM next year should be a suggestion to the Committee to look for an alternate investment option in a similar way as the interest rate is quite good right now.

On the basis of the documents received by the members and the introduction given by the Treasurer, the Chairman invited comments from the members.

Mr. Sampatkumar requested clarification on two items in the report, namely:

1. Expenditure of CHF 212
2. Sponsorship, Promotion and Grants CHF 1,240

The Treasurer clarified that as we have moved to the new app system, a charge is applied to every financial transaction that goes through it. The amount of CHF 212 is therefore the transaction fees charged by the app. So all those charges are put under this item.

The expenditure of CHF1,240 is towards the IAG directory. As per the IAG's AGM recommendation last year, we do not mention this item as "Directory". This item is named as "Sponsorship, Promotion and Grants". This amount is the cost of printing the directory. We have reduced the cost of printing the directory by almost half in 2018.

The Chairperson made a remark regarding the balance sheet following the comment made by the Auditor. He said that we have a time deposit in UBS bank of CHF 25,000 which will mature next year, at the same time IAG has a postal account. One has to see what is more advantageous in terms of the interest that is accruing. We have to see whether it is worthwhile leaving such a substantial amount in the postal account. As the deposit in the UBS account is going to mature next year, it may be an appropriate time to increase our capital fund in the UBS slightly more.

Mr. Pujari responded that we have CHF49,000 in the postal account as a closing statement. The Committee in any case cannot use the money as it is, as per the constitution. Sitting in the postal account, the money cannot be used by the Committee as such. He suggested that as a reserve we make a separate investment portfolio of CHF 25,000 either in UBS or based on the recommendation by the Auditor or others who can advise on an effective investment with less risk but higher returns. This can be explored.

The Auditor stated that he, along with the Treasurer and the President they can work together to look into a low risk reasonable return investment.

Mr. Sampatkumar responded to the Auditor that it would be great if they can find other more secure ways of investing the money. He also added that each year the excess of income over expenditure should be put in the fixed deposit.

Dr. Wadhwa suggested that there should be a provision for the Committee to use excess income over expenditure that is generated during the first-year term of the ExCom. This could help them organize better events in the second year.

Mr. Sampatkumar responded that this can be looked into on whether the ExCom can carry over the excess of income over expenditure to the following year. It should not be tied to the term of the ExCom. This needs to be looked at from an accounting point of view whether this can be done then automatically so that it becomes an income to start with and therefore it is usable for IAG activities in the current year. This is however not very clear right now as these aspects have not been dealt within the constitution and there are no financial rules.

Mr. Pradeep Prasad added that there should be an agenda item in every AGM requesting to use the excess of income over expenditure.

The Auditor responded that we could create a line in the balance sheet income over expenditure instead of adding it to the opening balance to be approved by AGM for usage in the next year.

The Chairperson proposed a suitable financial provision for the purpose be made in the constitution. This will enable the ExCom to use the funds for activities in the beginning of the year without having to wait for the AGM to authorize such use..

He also requested the Auditor and the treasurer to draft a policy in this regard. It was agreed that a proposal will be made and circulated by 30 August 2019 to all the IAG members.

The Chairperson proposed the report to be adopted. Mr. Nooh Shamsie and Ms. Lad seconded it. The report was adopted.

#### *4. Consider for approval of New Executive Committee*

The Chairperson stated that the last 2 years were very extraordinary and encouraging for the Association and the members. He congratulated Dr. Wadhwa and all the Committee members. He added that the activities of the Association were professionally organized and of a high standard. This could be seen in the volume of participation it had brought about. It is very reassuring that a Committee like this can work among themselves in a very cooperative manner, and also with the whole membership and give the members a sense of belonging to our country through the various programmes it organises.

Dr Maneesh Wadhwa thanked the Chair on the behalf of ExCom and proposed the following members for 2019-2020 ExCom

President - Dr. Maneesh Wadhwa

Vice President - Mr. Betsen Baby

Secretary – Mrs. Sadaf Shamsie

Treasurer - Mr. Sameer Pujari

#### **Members**

Mrs. Parvati Menon

Mr. Anand Mamtora

Mr. Pradeep Prasad

Mrs. Upasna Sharma

Mr. Mukesh Kumar Dhingra

### **Nominated Members**

Mr. Shaibal Roy Chowdhury

Auditor

Mr Nakshatra Pachauri

Dr. Wadhwa proposed to have an Ad-hoc Committee as well. This is to involve members who are active and would like to work for the ExCom on an Ad hoc basis. It was also agreed to include the Ad-hoc Committee members in the annual Report and the IAG directory.

Dr. Wadhwa requested to have the following people as Ad-hoc Committee members:

Ms. Pankaj Bhayana

Mrs. Daksha Sanghvi

Mr. Srinu Konuganthi

Ms. Ena Singh

As there were no other alternate proposals for the new Executive Committee the Chairperson suggested to approve the slate as proposed by Dr. Wadhwa.

The Chairperson also thanked Mr. Shaibal Roy Chowdhury, the Consul General for supporting the Association and said that the IAG is very grateful to the PMI in this respect.

### ***6. Nomination of Auditor***

The committee thanked Mr Pachauri for doing an excellent job as an Auditor in 2018. 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.

### ***7. Fix annual membership dues***

The membership fees remains unchanged. 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 Committee would 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.

### ***8. Any Other Business***

Ms. Usha Lad had a recommendation to the new Executive Committee on the IAG Navratri Event , that Navratri event should be a separate event, and should not be mixed with the Bollywood nite. She said that the Gujarti Community doesn't appreciate the joint event and this is the reason they go to Badan, Zurich, Lausanne etc. In other cities the Navratri event is not mixed with Bollywood and hence they enjoy the celebrations. In Geneva they come for the Navratri programme for the sake of being a member of the IAG and to support the Committee.

Dr. Maneesh Wadhwa thanked her for the feedback. He said that we could try have the Navratri event this year and see how many people turn up and what feedback we get from the members.

Ms. Sadaf Shamsie responded to this that we never organize a separate IAG event to celebrate Holi, Eid, Baisakhi or Diwali, Eid and Christmas. We always celebrate these festivals together as one IAG event so why should we have a separate event for Navratri. Mr Sameer Pujari seconded it. Mr. Wadhwa said that we will do a survey and take a decision based on the responses received.

In response to the email received from Ms Patricia Bell, Dr. Wadhwa made the following suggestions:

1. IAG Makes a donation to two good causes each year: Dr. Wadhwa pointed out that the IAG had not during the past five years made any donation to any cause. However, he promised to look into the matter and respond to Ms Patricia Bell.
2. Providing assistance to the community: Dr Wadhwa requested Ms Patricia Bell to be the contact person and develop a programme of assistance.

Mr. Sampatkumar supported the suggestions. Mr. Pujari however objected saying that there are several professional agencies/Organisations which are meant to do this job. They have a mandate and are governed by member states. IAG's mandate is to bring people of the Indian Community together and organise programme promoting Indian culture. Dr. Wadhwa responded that as it is mentioned in the Constitution of the IAG that it should contribute for humanitarian causes, we need guidance on how to go about it as it is not easy to choose which cause IAG should support.

The meeting was adjourned at 19.30



Mr. Rajagopalan Sampatkumar  
*AGM Chairperson,*



Mrs. Sadaf Shamsie  
*IAG Secretary, IAG*