

**WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION
29th GENERAL ASSEMBLY
PARIS 16-18 FEBRUARY 2019**

REPORT ON THE PLENARY SESSIONS

1. OPENING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1.1.An opening ceremony was held which included speeches by Mr. Dan-Viggo BERGTUN, President of the WVF, Mr. Saif KHAN, Acting Chair of the Standing Committee for the Americas and Mr. Laurent ATTAR-BAYROU of the Soldiers of Peace International Association (SPIA), co-host of the Congress.

1.2.The President opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. He then asked Dr. El Ktiri, a long-time friend of the World Veterans Federation to cut the ribbon to mark the opening of the First World Veterans Congress.

2. ELECTION OF THE VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSEMBLY

2.1.The President proposed the nomination of Mr. Hans Song (ROC on Taiwan) as Vice Chair of the 29th General Assembly.

2.2.This proposal was **accepted** by the General Assembly.

3. DESIGNATION OF THE RAPORTEURS FOR THE PLENARY SESSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

3.1.Mr. Naim SABIK and Mr. Albert TIBOR were appointed as rapporteurs of the plenary sessions of the General Assembly.

4. DESIGNATION OF THE 3 SCRUTINEERS (*Item 19 on the Agenda changed to Item 4*).

4.1.The following were appointed as scrutineers:

- Ms. Mirabel OPPENHEIMER (Israel)
- Mr. Hermy HEYMANN (Netherlands)
- Mr. Bob CHAMBERS (UK)

4.2.The President reminded the delegations that there are some countries that do not have the right to vote.

5. DESIGNATION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND RAPORTEURS OF THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

5.1.With regard to the proposed resolutions, delegations were reminded that there are deadlines to respect for them to be in harmony with the Constitution.

5.2.Then, a proposal concerning the appointment of Mr. Steen Møller PETERSEN of Denmark as Chair of the Resolutions Committee was **adopted** by the Assembly..

6. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6.1.The Agenda was adopted with the change of Item 19 (Designation of Three Scrutineers) to Item 4.

7. ROLL CALL OF THE DELEGATIONS PRESENT

7.1.This operation was carried out by the lifting of the sign by the Country Representatives of the delegations present.

7.2.Delegations were present from 29 Countries as follows:

Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Ghana, Israel, Jordan, Kosovo, South Korea, Kuwait, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia, Spain Sweden, ROC on Taiwan, Turkey, United Kingdom, USA, Vietnam.

8. Applications for Membership of the WVF

8.1.With regard to applications for admission to the WVF, the President reminded the Assembly that there are formalities to be completed, including Application Forms to be submitted. The Executive Board then conducts investigations to ensure that requests do not contradict the Constitution.

8.2.The following associations, whose applications for membership had been accepted by the Executive Board subject to ratification by the General Assembly were submitted to the General Assembly. **All were ratified:**

Namibia Ex-Soldiers Organisation
South Sudan Veterans Association
Serbian war Veterans Association
KLA War Veterans Society (Kosovo)
Association of the Ex-Combatants of Brazil
Trinidad & Tobago Legion of the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League
Soldiers of Peace International Association (Based in France)
Association of Military War Invalids of Serbia from all Wars
The MORIS Association of Societies and Clubs (Slovenia)

8.3.The President took the floor to recall that the WVF keeps doubling its efforts to seek other vital forces through new membership.

9. PRESENTATION OF THE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

9.1.The Chairman of the Elections Committee Mr. Bjarne HESSELBERG then spoke. He was also the Chairman of the preparatory Committee for the Congress and recalled that the organization of this event had lasted 1 year in collaboration with his staff who were active and excellent. He then recalled that the elections would take place Monday, February 18, 2019.

10. RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- 10.1. The Rules of Procedure were detailed at Page 161 of the Working Documents.
- 10.2. The Rules had not been changed or updated since the last General Assembly (nor the previous two General Assemblies) but are important because they outline how the General Assembly should proceed. It was essential that these were approved by the General Assembly. The President accepted that some members would not have read this section and he was prepared to be flexible with the rules. However, the rules would be applied in the event of any problems.
- 10.3. The General Assembly **adopted** the Rules of Procedure.

11. Report of the Executive Board

- 11.1. The members were asked to look at the Report of the Executive Board on Page 11 of the Working Documents which also included the Management Report. Members were asked to study the report and, if they had any comments, these could be made on Monday. No comments were made.
- 11.2. The President then outlined key challenges for the Federation. The main issue was the financial situation of the WVF. In order to improve the situation the Executive Board has implemented many initiatives, including the establishment of a Management Committee, comprising the President, Secretary General, Treasurer General and one member of staff from the Secretariat.
- 11.3. Members were aware that the WVF has been running a deficit for many years. Since the last General Assembly steps have been taken to reduce the deficit and these are detailed in the Treasurer General's report. Much of the improvement in the debt position has been due to improvements in management of the HQ (it was recognised that for many years the HQ has been too bureaucratic and there was too much emphasis on paper-based systems) and increased income from membership dues.
- 11.4. The President was happy to advise the members that there is now more control over the finances and that the budget projections for the forthcoming years show that the WVF will reverse the situation and have surplus funds. However, there is no room for complacency. There is still a need to find other ways of increasing revenue.
- 11.5. The WVF will look for less expensive offices when the current contract ends this year, and the Executive Board is also looking at reducing staff numbers. These have already been reduced from 5 to 2 with a plan to reduce to 1 and the Board will look at ways of increasing the number of volunteers who are able to assist. Volunteers are important, especially at events such as this General Assembly. There are also plans to increase WVF activities including PR and marketing of the organisation to advance its recognition and public image.
- 11.6. The Treasurer General then presented her report (a copy is contained within the working documents). This report covers 2015, 2016 and 2017. The Treasurer

General reiterated the need to increase dues from members and seek other fund-raising activities and sponsorship.

11.7. The delegate from Morocco took to the floor and thanked the Executive Board and the Treasurer General for the excellent work they have done on the finances and in establishing a plan for moving forward.

11.8. The Head of the Israeli delegation asked if dues unpaid from previous years, especially 2018, will be recovered. The Treasurer General replied that there have been several attempts made to recover these funds but, ultimately, the Executive Board does not want to lose any more members.

11.9. The General Assembly was asked to adopt the financial report. The report was **adopted**.

12. REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL COMMITTEE

12.1. Mr. Anders Ramnerup (Sweden) presented the report of the meeting of the WVF Financial Committee of 6 December 2018.

12.2. The important point for members to note is that the Auditor's Notes for all 3 years stated that the WVF would be in danger of going into liquidation if serious action was not taken to reduce expenditure and increase income, notably ensuring that membership dues are collected.

12.3. He also referred to the list of Finance Committee recommendations which are shown at Point 12 of the report contained in the Working Documents at page 45.

13. ADOPTION OF THE AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEARS 2015, 2016 AND 2017

13.1. It is important for members to note that within the 2015 accounts, there is reference to "Assistance to Central and Eastern European Countries", "Reserve for the Asia Pacific Development Fund" and "Reserve for the Cuban Members Association". However, these are separate private institutions with their own identity and should not be mixed up with WVF funds.

13.2. The Audited accounts for 2015 were **adopted** by the General Assembly

13.3. The Audited accounts for 2016 were **adopted** by the General Assembly

13.4. Dr El Ktiri (Morocco) raised a question concerning the amount of € 30,000 shown as an advance to South Africa and asked for an update on what has happened to these funds. The President replied that it had proved impossible to recover this amount and the Executive Board had debated whether to appoint a lawyer to pursue recovery of the amount or to write it off, however the cost of collecting the funds would be likely to exceed the amount, therefore the amount must be written off.

13.5. Gen. (Ret.) Sverker GORANSON (Sweden) asked the Treasurer General for explanation concerning some figures.

13.6. The adoption of the 2017 Account was postponed until Monday, at which time the Treasurer General presented her explanations and the 2017 accounts were **adopted** by the General Assembly.

14. BUDGET FOR THE YEARS 2019, 2020 AND 2021:

14.1. With regard to the forecast budget for the years 2019-2020-2021, it was emphasized that this is only an overview, inviting all those who have observations or details to come forward.

14.2. The said budget was then submitted for approval to the meeting, and was **adopted** .

15. ADOPTION OF THE DUES SCALE FOR THE YEARS 2019, 2020 AND 2021

15.1. The Executive Board plans to review the scale of contributions and present a new Dues Scale to come into effect from 2020. This proposal was **adopted** unanimously by the Assembly.

16. PEACE AND SECURITY

16.1.A Session was held on Peace and Security.

16.2.The facilitator of the session was Mrs Eva Lopez, Barcelona International Peace Centre (Spain).

16.3.The following Keynote Speakers:

Mr Christian Balslev-Olesen, Development and Humanitarian expert (Denmark)
 Jugde Robert S. Croll, vfonds (The Netherlands)
 Mr Remi Praud, MD, Liberation Route Europe Foundation (The Netherlands)
 Mrs Irma Specht, Transition International (The Netherlands)
 Mr Sergei Samojlow, UN veteran (SPIA, Ukraine)

Gave informative presentations on the following issues:

- The UN project Right to Peace
- Military peace keeping activities
- Cooperation between humanitarian organizations and military peacekeeping
- Peacekeeping in the Middle East
- Experiences from a military peacekeeper
- Global Veteran Peace Training Initiative
- Commemoration activities
- Introducing the World Veterans Federation Peace Prize

17. HEALTH AND WELFARE

17.1. A session was held on Health and Welfare

17.2. The facilitator of the session was Mr Jos Weerts (Netherlands), Head of the WVF Health and Welfare Division

17.3. The following Keynote Speakers:

Mr Walter Busuttill, Combat Stress (UK)
 Mr Knut Østbøll, UN veteran (Norway)
 Mr Edwin de Wolf, wounded veteran (The Netherlands)
 Emanuel Jacob, President EUROMIL (Belgium)
 Laurent Attar-Bayrou, President SPIA (France)

again gave interesting and informative presentations on the following issues:

- Military psychiatry and the treatment and rehabilitation of veterans' mental illness
- Post traumatic stress disorder treatments / Combat Stress
- Rehabilitation through sports
- Rehabilitation through meaningful projects
- Military veterans support
- Follow up of legislation
- Veterans and their relatives

Further details on some of these presentations can be found on the WVF website: <http://www.wvf-fmac.org/index.php/events-en/29th-general-assembly>

18. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

EB/AS 2	Proposed Amendment to Article 9 of the Constitution	Adopted
EB/AS 6	Proposed Amendment to Rule 10 of the Constitutional Rules	Adopted
MOR/AS 1	Proposed Amendment to the Preamble of the Constitution	Adopted
MOR/AS 2	Proposed Amendment to Article 2 of the Constitution	Adopted
MOR/AS 3	Proposed Amendment to Articles 6 And 9 of the Constitution	Adopted
MOR/AS4 AMD	Proposed Amendment to Article 16 of the Constitution	Adopted
MOR/AS 5	Proposed Amendment to Article 17 of the Constitution	Adopted
UK/AS 1	Proposed Amendment to Article 24 of the Constitution	Adopted

19. DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

19.1.INTERNAL AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

MOR-1	Preservation and Valorization of the Shared Historical Memory Between Nations: Case of Morocco and Vietnam	Adopted
MOR-3	For the Organization of the 8 th International Conference on the Legislation of War Veterans and War Victims	Adopted
MOR-10	Providing Greater Protection for War Veterans and War Victims	Adopted

19.2. ORIENTATION AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

MOR-4	Fostering a Secure, Regular and Orderly Process of Migration	Adopted
MOR-6 AMD	Respect for Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity of Nations	Adopted
MOR-7	Stopping the Recruitment of Children in Military Forces	Adopted
	<i>there was a halt in the proceedings in order to allow Morocco and the UK to agree on an amended wording. An agreement was reached and the resolution was amended to the following – “Put an end to the deployment of children in conflict zones”.</i>	
UK-1	Data Collection on Commonwealth Veterans and Their Dependants	Adopted
RUS-1	Addressing the Human Rights Violations aimed at Political Blackmail	Adopted
RUS-2	Addressing the Growing Scourge of Terrorism Implemented by ISIS	Adopted

19.3.Morocco intervened to request that the resolution MAR 5 be considered merged with resolution RUS-2. Following a vote the resolutions are merged.

19.4.Concerning a Draft Resolution submitted by Azerbaijan, the General Assembly voted on whether to accept the late proposal, with only 8 votes for the submission was not approved.

20. ELECTION OF THE MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE BOARD AND THE FINANCIAL COMMITTEE:

20.1.The chairman of the Elections Committee announced the start of the election process by a roll call of the delegations.

20.2. He informed the meeting that current President **Dan-Viggo BERGTUN** (Norway) is the only candidate for the WVF's Presidency, therefore no ballot was necessary and he was **re-elected President of the World Veterans Federation**

20.3. With regard to the post of Deputy President: 2 candidates submitted their candidatures, a vote was therefore held by secret ballot:

- Dr. El KTIRI: 12 votes;
- Prince Al SABAH: 10 votes.

Dr. El Ktiri (Morocco) was therefore **elected Deputy President of the World Veterans Federation**.

20.4. With regard to the position of Treasurer General: Only one candidate was registered, **Mrs. INGE NEDERGAARD** (Denmark), therefore no ballot was necessary and she was **re-elected Treasurer General of the World Veterans Federation**.

20.5. For the Financial Committee, no ballot was necessary as three members and three alternate members were identified. The following were therefore **elected to the WVF Financial Committee**:

MEMBERS:

- **Mr. Anders RAMNERUP** (Sweden)
- **Lt. Col. Lau Kee SIONG** (Singapour)
- **Mr Fayez ALENEZI** (Kuwait)

ALTERNATE MEMBERS:

- **Mrs. Mirabel OPPENHEIMER** (Israel)
- **Col. Dmitriy BABIYCHUK** (Russia)
- **Mrs. Pauline Marlyse NDJENG** (Cameroun)

21. RATIFICATION OF EX-OFFICIO APPOINTMENTS OF THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES (VICE PRESIDENTS OF THE WVF)

21.1. The Standing Committees had submitted the names of the Chairpersons elected during the meetings of the Standing Committees held at the General Assembly and the following were **ratified as Vice Presidents of the WVF**:

21.2. Chair Standing Committee on African Affairs: **Col. Alfred FULLER** (Cameroon)

21.3. Chair Standing Committee for the Americas: **Mr. Saif KHAN** (USA)

21.4. Chair Standing Committee for Asia and the Pacific: **Mr. Chi-Liang WU** (ROC on Taiwan)

21.5. Chair Standing Committee on European Affairs: **Mr. Birger Kjer HANSEN** (Denmark)

21.6. No Chair was elected for the Standing Committee on Women as no candidates came forward.

21.7. The President congratulated the new Executive Board on their mandates, while recalling that the elections were held in a democratic manner.

22. HONORARY TITLES

22.1 No honorary titles were conferred on this occasion

23. REHABILITATION PRIZE

23.1. The WVF Rehabilitation Prize was awarded during the Health and Welfare Session to Mr. Knut Østbøll of Norway for his continued devotion to the rehabilitation of disabled veterans through his contribution to defining and enforcing their legal rights, establishing and expanding the nationwide ‘Buddy Support’ system, and educating staff to care for their fellow veterans, as well as taking part in the educational program for the Buddy Support system in Scandinavia.

24. DECORATION CEREMONY (MEDALS)

24.1. The World Veteran Medallion was awarded to:

Mr. Saif KHAN (USA)
 Mr. Hans SONG (ROC on Taiwan)
 Col. Alfred FULLER (Cameroon)
 Col. Bjarne HESSELBERG (Denmark)

24.2. The World Veterans Support Medal in Gold was awarded to:

Ms. Eva LOPEZ (Spain)
 Mr. Teje ENGEVIK (Norway)
 Mr. Viacheslav KALININ (Russia)
 Dr. Naim SABIK (Morocco)
 Mr. Tibor ALBERT (Belgium)
 Mr. Steen Møller PETERSEN

24.3. The WVF 60th Anniversary Silver Medallion was awarded to:

Col. Dmitriy BABIYCHUK (Russia)

25. OTHER MATTERS

Nothing to report

26. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

26.1. An offer was made by Mr. Saif KHAN (USA) to host the next World Veterans Congress in Washington

27. CLOSING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

27.1. The President closed the meeting and thanked the delegates, observers and guests for their participation. He gave particular thanks to the Executive Board, Preparatory Committee, Secretariat, Sponsors and to all those who had contributed to the success of the event.