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# Conference Digest

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## 1991 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE FORMAT

The 1991 World Service Conference (WSC) broke new ground in several areas. First, it was the longest, perhaps most grueling conference in N.A. history. On the positive side, many participants felt this year's conference seemed less combative than in years past, perhaps because of the time devoted to discussion of topics of deep concern to the fellowship. Some felt that while the first half of the conference went very well, toward the end of the week during business sessions, our "motion sickness" reappeared.

Many participants indicated that the conference schedule was just too exhausting. The WSC Administrative Committee is looking into ways of shortening the time spent at the WSC while still maintaining the work load. One possible method of shortening the conference would include having two sessions going on simultaneously so that regional service representatives (RSRs) could attend one while the RSR-alternates attend the other. In light of the length of this year's meeting, the conference format is a priority issue.

The conference seated and extended a warm welcome to five new regions: Freestate, Arkansas, Mountain Valley, Southern Idaho, and the Bahamas. Sixty-eight regions now participate in the WSC.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM

At WSC 1990, some conference members, primarily from N.A.'s non-U.S. communities, met among themselves to discuss the need for a more encompassing international perspective to the WSC. The International Development Forum (IDF) was created as a way to begin meeting this need. Although not officially a part of the WSC, the conference workweek began with the IDF, well-attended by members from both inside and outside the United States.

According to the chairperson of the World Service Board of Trustees (WSB), the "attitude and behavior of the participants during the International Development Forum was a powerful and positive message of the growth and maturity of our fellowship." The morning session began with reports regarding development in several areas of the world: the Pacific Rim, which includes Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific Islands and Southeast Asia; the

Caribbean Islands; Canada; Central and South America; and the Middle East and Europe.

After these reports, forum participants broke up into groups to discuss how our fellowship can help N.A. communities grow and how N.A. can carry the message to places where the fellowship does not yet exist. Several themes developed from these discussions, including but not limited to communication with developing countries, our relationship with public officials in nations without N.A., and translation of N.A. literature.

A motion to hold a two-day IDF was committed to the WSB and the Interim Committee, and if funds are available, a two-day IDF will be held during the coming year. In fact, conference participants rated this forum the highest on their list of discretionary priorities for this conference year. Tapes of the IDF are available through the World Service Office (WSO) for \$9.00 plus shipping and handling charges. Look for a more complete written report in the near future.

## RSR PANELS

After considerable dialogue during the past year, conference leadership decided that RSR panels should be utilized to present information to the WSC on issues of concern to their regions. This year, panel members discussed topics related to interregional communications, the need to establish an N.A. identity, and group conscience. Panel leaders chosen by the WSC Administrative Committee were asked to develop position papers prior to the conference on these topics, which were presented to participants on the first day of the WSC. Following these presentations, ad hoc committees were formed to discuss the issues, and their findings were presented to the conference.

The RSR panels were thought so successful that they will continue to be utilized on future issues. RSRs who volunteered to work on various issues in the coming year resulting from these discussions were divided into seven groups based on geography.

Topics to be considered during the coming year include the need for interregional communication, conference format, and the funding of N.A. services. There is still a need for more participants so that additional topics can be addressed. Those interested, or those with input, should notify the WSC Administrative Committee in care of the WSO.

## BASIC TEXT

This year's conference participants made a concerted effort to alleviate controversy surrounding the Basic Text. Motions that reaffirmed the WSO's status as holder of N.A.'s intellectual properties were carried overwhelmingly by conference participants.

After much discussion regarding the process utilized to develop the Basic Text, subsequent changes to the book, and debate about which edition of the Basic Text had in fact been approved by the conference, voting participants of the WSC agreed to issue the following statement to the fellowship:

"The Basic Text, Fifth Edition, is the only edition of the Basic Text that is currently approved by the World Service Conference of Narcotics Anonymous for publication and sale. The World Service Office Board of Directors is entrusted with the responsibility for protecting the fellowship's physical and intellectual properties, including the Basic Text, and at the Board of Director's discretion, shall take legal action to protect those rights against any and all persons who choose to infringe upon this literature trust."

## MOTIONS CARRIED

The following are some of the WSC 1991 motions that seem to stand out. First, the site of the 1992 WSC will be either Kansas City or St. Louis. The following year, the WSC returns to Van Nuys, followed by an East Coast location in 1994. Continuing rotation will be reevaluated at WSC 1994.

Also of interest is a change in the name of the *Fellowship Report*, which will now be known as the *Conference Report*. The *Conference Report* will continue to serve the communication needs of the WSC. A motion also passed creating the *Conference Digest*. This premier issue results from that decision. It is hoped that this new periodical will better serve the needs of our fellowship at large.

A motion to disband the Joint Administrative Committee (JAC) failed. After discussion of this issue, however, the following motion was passed: "That, for conference year 1991-1992, the fiscal responsibilities currently assigned to the Joint Administrative Committee be reassigned to a committee composed of the treasurer of the World Service Conference (WSC), and the chairpersons of the WSC, Board of Trustees and Board of Directors. This committee shall be known as the Interim Committee. Further, the Interim Committee shall make necessary decisions affecting N.A. world services when the WSC is not in session, mindful of priorities previously established by the WSC. The Interim Committee shall report its actions throughout 1991-92 in the *Conference Report*."

## FINANCES

The financial condition of the WSC and the WSO are at a critical, all-time low. The Interim Committee will make decisions about which projects can move forward, but it is clear that even if WSC donations match expected income projected at ten percent greater than 1990, additional

projects prioritized by the conference will probably not be undertaken due to financial constraints. In fact, at this time it appears that the Interim Committee will have to decide which of the basic world service projects will proceed. Currently, the WSC does not have a reserve as it has in past years. If projected donations fail to materialize, fixed budget items will have to be cut based on priorities established by the conference.

The chairperson of the conference stated in her summary report, "I hate to solicit increased donations. I have been reading or writing such pleas for years now, and I'm tired of them. I believe that groups, areas, and regions who refuse to participate in the self-support of the fellowship as a whole are not moved by them, and those who are already doing their best are offended.

"Once again, the conference raised our awareness of the struggles of addicts outside the U.S. recovering through N.A., without the benefit of literature or support. These needs will be minimally addressed at best. It seems that the disparity between our desire to carry the message and our financial ability to do so is growing. We are doing better, growing and prospering, but not in comparison to the prosperity of the disease. Our pledge that 'no addict seeking recovery need die from the horrors of addiction' is a lie in much of the world.

"These thoughts make me cry. They also make me feel helpless in the face of the level of need for our program. I recognize this could lead me to old behavior, doing nothing because I can't do it all or do it perfectly. . . . I intend to ask my home group to give \$5.00 a month to WSC. I hope the group will agree. Maybe some of you have ideas about what an individual addict, who wanted to, could do. If so, please send them along. Our experience shows that we can make a difference; that addicts can make it possible for other addicts to recover if we resolve to do so."

## HOSPITAL & INSTITUTIONS (H&I)

A reminder from H&I that *Reaching Out* is now available by subscription to any facility housing addicts, and any area or regional H&I subcommittee wishing to augment its current allotment. The annual cost is \$28.00 for twenty copies, quarterly.

Members of the H&I External Ad Hoc Subcommittee have nearly completed a survey they plan to send to professionals involved with addicts in either treatment or correctional settings. They are assisting the WSB External Affairs Committee in evaluating N.A.'s image within the professional community. Once this survey is distributed, H&I will be working on a similar survey designed to assess the overall H&I picture throughout the fellowship.

An H&I Multinational Ad Hoc Subcommittee was created to gather information from existing H&I communities outside the United States. This subcommittee will attempt to contact countries where N.A. exists, but have no functional H&I committee. In some nations, existing laws or views on addiction may hinder the development of H&I services.

## LITERATURE

A great deal happened on the literature front at this year's conference. *For Those in Treatment* was approved by the conference, and is now in its final production stages. *In Times of Illness* was released for a one-year approval period. "A-list" priority projects, which include the steps portion of *It Works: How and Why* and the daily meditation book, were approved, and production schedules were submitted. These ambitious schedules call for release of the daily meditation book for conference action in 1992, and a summer 1993 release for the steps portion of *It Works* for action at the 1994 WSC.

Directly impacting the WSC Literature Committee was a motion passed creating *An Introductory Guide to Narcotics Anonymous*, which will include readings from our Basic Text and informational pamphlets selected for the newcomer. The conference gave the WSC Literature Committee responsibility to produce a table of contents and to survey conference participants and regional literature committees on appropriate contents for this book. It is hoped that the introductory guide will be available as an inventory item some time in late 1991.

## POLICY COMMITTEE

The WSC Policy Committee's motion to revise its guidelines to better reflect the role it perceived for itself failed. The committee will continue to examine its guidelines during the coming year. Another motion that proposed disbanding the committee also failed. Revising the conference format, including a new election procedure, and RSR communication have both been assigned to Policy by the conference chairperson. Results of this work will be given to the WSC Administrative Committee as input.

The conference gave a vote of confidence to the WSC Policy Committee to continue work on guidelines for the seating of new regions. Some debate was heard at this year's conference on the viability of seating all regions that request it. Some believed that we actually do a disservice to some regions when we seat them without benefit of any guidelines as to size and self-sufficiency. Look for a survey that addresses this issue sometime this year.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION (P.I.)

One of the major projects for P.I. this year is the development of a video about Narcotics Anonymous. Since this video will be a WSO inventory item, a motion was passed that directed the WSO to fund its production. Since bids had not been received from all sources, cost projections were unavailable at the conference.

Considerable discussion ensued regarding the results of P.I.'s informal membership survey. After some debate about that survey, the conference approved the new informational pamphlet, *N.A.—A Resource in Your Community*. Also approved was another new pamphlet, *P.I. and the N.A. Member*. Proposed changes to the *P.I. Handbook* were accepted by the conference, as well.

This year's P.I. agenda includes international outreach; a revision of *A Guide to Phoneline Service*; and a look at

rural public information. The WSC P.I. Committee is continuing to explore the meaning of the Eleventh Tradition, which focuses on our public relations policy, as it relates to public information work.

## AD HOC COMMITTEE ON N.A. SERVICE

The WSC Ad Hoc Committee on N.A. Service presented a revision of its Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service to the conference. Due to dialogue at the conference, the committee will discuss continuing its work under the leadership of the WSB after WSC 1992.

This year, their work plan consists of completing the approval version of the Twelve Concepts for N.A. Service for action at WSC 1992. If resources are available, they will also address questions related to metropolitan services. The updated version of *A Guide to Service in Narcotics Anonymous*, which includes the revised Twelve Concepts, is available from the WSO. Cost is \$5.00 plus shipping and handling.

## AD HOC COMMITTEE ON ISOLATED GROUPS/MEETINGS

The motion proposing the creation of a standing committee from the WSC Ad Hoc Committee on Isolated Groups/Meetings failed. Responsibility for the project was returned to the WSC Administrative Committee, and the same individuals who were involved in the ad hoc committee will continue work on this endeavor. The conference approved a resolution which asked that whether they [isolated groups] are groups, or striving to be groups, the WSO respond to their needs.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

This year, the World Service Board of Trustees gave two panel presentations to the conference. The WSB Traditions Ad Hoc Committee working on the traditions portion of *It Works: How and Why* presented chapters on the first six traditions for fellowship input and review. Considerable discussion, much of it favorable, surrounded the work of this ad hoc committee.

The second WSB panel, consisting of members from the three service arms, highlighted discussion involving the possibility of the duplication of efforts; merging some conference committees with the WSB committees; placing the WSB in an administrative/managerial role on some projects; and the difficulty of communicating discussions and decisions among the various WSC boards and committees.

Considerable dialogue ensued at WSC 91 over "turf wars" allegedly occurring over various projects and priorities. In the Conference Summary Report, the chairperson of the WSB stated his concern that many conference participants "... had the feeling that we, the WSB, were out to 'take over' the World Service Conference. Rest assured, this is not the case. We were as surprised by most of these motions as was everyone else! While we had held preliminary discussions during the past year about the feasibility of combining some of the conference committees

with our committees, the full board had not developed a consensus on whether to pursue any options to this effect."

For the first time, the WSB presented a slate of candidates for election to open trustee positions. Congratulations to the four new trustees elected at WSC 1991. It is hoped that with the addition of these new members, the WSB can more effectively address the concerns of an ever-growing fellowship.

### THE WORLD CONVENTION

The World Convention Corporation (WCC) presented its report to the conference detailing its yearly activity. Due to financial constraints, the WCC has modified its administrative plan for 1991-92. The WCC will attempt to accomplish its full slate of business while holding fewer meetings.

WCNA-20, held in Portland, Oregon, had lower attendance than anticipated, hence income failed to match projections. Preregistrations for WCNA-21, to be held in Sydney, Australia, have also been sluggish. Since attendance outside the U.S. draws less participation due to travel-cost factors, this trend is expected to continue for the twenty-second World Convention. Hopefully, by the time the Chicago convention rolls around in 1993, the financial picture will improve.

Remember that bids for the 1994 World Convention, to be held in Zone One, must be postmarked by July 1, 1991. If a complete bid package cannot be mailed before the deadline, contact the WCC Coordinator at the WSO.

Convention Corporation members and WSO staff are currently planning WCNA-21, to be held in Sydney, Australia; WCNA-22 to be held in Toronto, Canada; and WCNA-23 to be held in Chicago, Illinois.

### WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

Three proposals regarding world service operations were ratified. These include the creation of a Translations Committee, a world service Travel Committee, and further

study of a Budget Review and Utilization Committee, whose task would be to prepare a unified budget for all world service operations.

Joe Gossett, the new executive director of the WSO, was introduced to WSC participants. Joe comes to the WSO with a long background in nonprofit administration. Upon his hire, he immediately began work on current WSO policies and procedures.

After a particularly constructive committee of the whole, the conference gave clear direction to the WSO regarding protection of the fellowship's intellectual properties. The WSO will remain sole trustee, publisher, and distributor of the fellowship's literature.

Work continues on a literature trust document. Such a document would attempt to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the fellowship, the WSC, and the WSO in relation to N.A.'s properties such as literature, logos, etc. The document is being reviewed by a committee of WSC trusted servants and other interested members who have previously served in world services. In addition, both the WSB and the WSO board will review the document at their joint meeting in June. Stay tuned for regular updates.

The office is hard at work preparing items approved by this year's WSC for inclusion in WSO inventory. Many participants were excited about the addition of the "Basic Journal," a diary for those keeping track of their daily progress in recovery. The Basic Journal will be available through the WSO by August 1991. Upon completion of priority

production projects, the WSO will continue work on producing new handbooks reflecting decisions made at WSC 1991.

As directed by the conference, the WSO board is preparing a report on a special ruling sought from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service regarding nonprofit tax-exempt status. This report will detail the costs, time, and requirements associated with seeking a ruling of this nature.

#### New items available from the WSO:

- \* Traditions One-Six - Review-and-input form, Stock #1161, Cost \$2.50 + S&H
- \* *A Guide to Service in Narcotics Anonymous*, Spring 1991, (including 12 Concepts, Revised, and study notes), Stock #2100, Cost \$5.00 + S&H
- \* WSC 1991 Minutes (Draft)  
Cost - \$5.00 + S&H
- \* Reports to WSC 1991 (from WSC Committees and Boards), Cost \$5.00 + S&H
- \* Tapes from International Development Forum '91,  
Cost - \$9.00 + S&H

#### Contact the WSO for availability and cost of the following items:

- \* *For Those in Treatment*
- \* *N.A. - A Resource in your Community*
- \* *P.I. and the N.A. Member*
- \* *Temporary Working Guide to the Service Structure*, 1991 edition,
- \* *In Times of Illness - Approval-form*,
- \* 1991 WSO Annual Report,
- \* Tapes of WSC 1991

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