

## **International Issues News # 27 (Apr 2013): Resolutions to the 2013 International Council Meeting.<sup>1</sup>**

### **Introduction**

The package of resolutions submitted to the International Council Meeting (ICM) has recently been published. As usual, this is a sizeable document – there are 47 resolutions covering 83 pages. The large majority of the resolutions cover familiar ground, but a few are on new topics.

The 2009 and 2011 ICMs were both dominated by proposals from the International Executive Committee (IEC). These introduced many of the basic building blocks of AI's overall operational and governance structure that activists are now familiar with: the Integrated Strategic Plan for 2010-16, the growth strategy for 2011-15, new forms of AI presence in countries without AI sections, One Financial Amnesty (including the new assessment system for section contributions), the principle of core operating standards for all AI entities, clarification of the roles and responsibilities of all parts of AI's governance, and reform of the operation of the IEC itself. This ICM agenda, by contrast, is dominated by section resolutions that follow through from these momentous changes, and by a number of IEC resolutions that do the same. The emphasis in the meeting, therefore, is likely to be on making existing ideas and systems work better, rather than on striking out in new directions.

Since 2007, ICM resolutions have been dealt with in a variety of ways, as appropriate to their content. The same will be true this year. There will be plenaries, workshops, table discussions (previously called World Cafés), and workshops. The outcomes of the ICM, in turn, will be reflected in both formal decisions and in summaries of shared understandings drafted by the ICM chair. This diversity reflects the reality that sometimes formal debates are appropriate, but at other times formats which give delegates opportunities to work at tables, move around, and develop more lively conversations are better.

The 47 resolutions that have been submitted by Sections (37) and the IEC (10) have, as usual, been divided into four main groups – finance, governance, human rights strategy, and organization.

### **Finance**

There are nine resolutions on finance. The IEC is proposing to strengthen financial reporting by producing quarterly global management accounts to give an overview of the finances of the International Secretariat together with the major fundraising sections. It is also proposing minor adjustments to the international assessment system. AI Australia is calling for better financial information to be available to donors and members; it is also calling for the assessment system to be based on the current financial position of sections (instead of their position over the last two years, as is currently the case), and for some exchange rate smoothing in the calculations. AIUK wishes the assessment system to make allowance for section-raised income that goes directly to the international budget. AI France would like to see a study made of AI's reserves and reserves policy. AI Denmark is calling for the establishment of a Strategic Fundraising Investment Fund, as well as more clarity on allocating costs for functions and activities carried by national sections on behalf of the whole AI movement. Finally, AI Puerto Rico seeks a mechanism for easing the financial barriers to participation on the IEC (this builds on the 2011 ICM decision to provide limited compensation for loss of earnings of IEC members).

### **Governance**

There are 14 resolutions on governance, including six from the IEC. AI Canada wishes the interval between ICMs to increase from two years to three years to reduce the cost to the movement of these meetings. AI Norway would like the IEC chair to be directly elected by the ICM, replacing the present system where the IEC itself elects its chair. AI Germany is calling for existing mechanisms to facilitate international discussions and participation in decision-making to be strengthened. AI Spain is calling for a new integrated accountability system to cover the work and responsibilities of the IEC, the governance core standards (see below), and the implementation of ICM resolutions. AI Netherlands approaches the same topic from a slightly different perspective and calls for a study of AI's governance systems, with a particular emphasis on their ability to support new ways of working and maximising human rights impact. AI Israel would like each new regional hub to have its own governing statute.

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<sup>1</sup> This article is largely based on *ICM Circular 6: First batch of resolutions and statute amendments* (ORG 50/001/2013, March).

AI Venezuela would like to strengthen protection of AI's independence and impartiality by restricting the election or appointment to senior posts in AI of those who have held high-level posts in government or other organizations that could affect the actual or perceived impartiality of AI. Five sections together have tabled a resolution calling for an overhaul of the AI statute on the grounds that it has been subject to a large number of piecemeal and incremental changes over several decades, resulting in a document that is not easy to use. They also propose some small technical statute amendments in two resolutions.

The IEC's resolutions all follow up on decisions from the last ICM. There is a very lengthy resolution defining core operating standards for all AI entities: these cover constitutional requirements; roles, responsibilities and conduct of AI leaders; policies and guidelines, including human resources, data management, and communications; and assessment, reporting, monitoring and enforcement of the standards themselves. Drafts of these standards have been circulated, discussed and revised in preparation for this resolution.<sup>2</sup> Another resolution embeds these standards in the statute. There is also a call for the deadline for IEC candidate nominations to increase from 24 hours to 3 months before the election, so that the movement can adequately consider all the candidates. In addition, the IEC is proposing to update the procedures for suspending and terminating AI membership because of some ambiguities created by the previous update in 2011.

### **Human rights strategy**

There are 13 resolutions on human rights strategy, all from sections, covering range of specific issues, several of which have been debated at previous ICMs. AI Japan seeks a pilot study of the human rights impact of nuclear power plant accidents; AI Greece believes that AI should oppose attacks on humanitarian aid missions, and that AI should broaden its concerns regarding indiscriminate and "less lethal" weapons. AI Israel says that AI should extend its definition of conscientious objectors; AI Germany seeks a review of AI's counter-terrorism related work and adequate priority for it; AI Venezuela would like the movement to do more work to prevent moves by states to regress from the responsibilities placed upon them by international agreements. AI Puerto Rico would like AI to take stronger action against the death penalty where it is imposed on indigenous peoples and in non-sovereign territories; AI France would like AI's work on Europe to include substantial research; AI Ghana would like AI to develop a strategy covering business and mining activities. AI Mexico wishes the movement to incorporate work on the rights of peasants into its programmes of work; AI Peru would like the current worldwide *Demand Dignity* campaign to include action on the right to water and sanitation; AI Switzerland would like a study of how the rights to food and water can be incorporated into future AI work; and AIUK seeks a comprehensive policy on sporting organizations and the prevention of human rights abuses.

### **Organization**

There are 11 resolutions on organization. AI Austria calls for a system to be developed to provide adequate management and governance support to all sections; AI Belgium calls for a study of how AI can re-invigorate its commitment to international solidarity; it also calls for an evaluation of the Global Transition Programme (the new name for the process which includes *Moving Closer to the Ground*), as well as the creation of new standards defining research quality and the use of research to formulate AI positions on specific issues. AI France would like new guidelines on accepting funding from foundations; it wishes to see the recommendations of the most recent review of government funding being implemented; and it also calls for an evaluation of AI's language policy. AI Ireland calls for an assessment of the impact on existing sections of the shift in AI spending towards the global south; AI Sweden and three other sections seek a new mechanism to ensure that all parts of AI have a common understanding of our core values and their practical implications. AI Switzerland calls for a study of how AI's relief work can be made more effective and how such work can fit with future strategic plans.

The IEC has submitted a resolution on new forms of presence giving greater precision to the steps it expects to take in the next two years in developing international membership, affiliations, partnerships, virtual sections, and deferred self-governance entities.

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<sup>2</sup> See *Core Standards - Consultation Paper* (ORG 70/010/2012, September 2012)

**International Issues News** is put together to spread updates on AI's international focus to a wider audience worldwide, encouraging more members become engaged with the issues. The articles are summaries of internal papers which we aim to condense without offering our opinions on the original documents.

We welcome any comments, questions or suggestions on our choice of documents, the accuracy of the summaries, and how the newsletter could be more usefully developed. **Please write to [iinews@aivol.org](mailto:iinews@aivol.org)**

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#### **Note on original documents**

These articles are taken from internal AI documents from the Weekly Mailings sent out by the International Secretariat. AI sections vary in their practice with respect to making these available to members. If you are interested in finding the original document please investigate within your own Section but feel free to let us know if you are having problems.