

XXI Interamerican Scout Conference
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**Words from the Secretary General of WOSM
to the Plenary of the Interamerican Scout Conference**

Dear Sisters and Brothers Scouts,

A little over a year ago I received an e-mail from a person up to this time, unknown to me but, apparently, with a brilliant career in the highest ranks of the entrepreneurial sector: he proposed that I postulate myself as Secretary General of the World Organization of the Scout Movement.

I would have erased the message quickly, and considered "spam", electronic garbage, had I not seen the word "scout".

I answered saying that, if that was not a joke, it was for me a great honor to have been only contacted for this position, and I sent him my CV. I did not hear from him for over three months, when he wrote to me again to inform me, that after one first selection, I was among the first 105 candidates, and from there to a bit over one month, and after a surprising selection process, without ever having requested it, nor imagined it, I found myself for the first time before the World Committee. I had been selected and now I was being asked to serve for our marvelous movement.

Clearly a Higher Sign. Once again I gave a "Yes", accepting the challenge.

The great Latin American poet Jos6 Mart! one day wrote: "The place of a man is where he is most useful", I hope God (and the World Committee) has made his calculations correct deciding that for me, now, that place is here.

"Do you want to be part of the great Scout family?" It was 7 July 1965 when for the first time the then leader of the Rome 24 troop was inviting me to define myself. That was the first time I pronounced that "Yes", promising over my honor to be a Scout "God willing forevee".

After finishing my medicine studies I left the Scout group where I had served as educator leader in the Scout Section as well as in the Rover, left for Nicaragua as a volunteer medical doctor; I thought the time had come to put away the scarf forever.

Anyway, as my decision to be a medical doctor that of serving with my profession to the neediest was a decision profoundly linked to the promise we all share here.

I was a Scout when, at the St. Paul hospital in downtown Vancouver (BC Canada) I prepared myself carefully projecting me as a medical doctor at the

service of the poorest in Africa, without imagining that finally I would fulfill that mission in Central America.

I was a Scout, on foot or on beast, in the peasant communities of the farthest away places in the Nicaraguan mountains to take medical attention there where it had never reached.

Nicaraguan brothers, that mountain has been to me "something more than a big green steppe".

I was a Scout when, years later as a UNICEF officer I worked in Mexico to promote primary health for the Mexican childhood, moving through the Indian provinces of Chiapas and Guerrero and dedicated my weekends to volunteer medical work in a barrio of the slums in the City in Mexico.

I was a Scout when, for 176 years I served the Italian Cooperation for the development being in charge of health and social development programmes with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and later of a large area of the African , Continent, fighting bureaucracy for assistance to be appropriate, transparent, efficient and efficacious.

I was a Scout when in the last years I got involved in my graduate degree teaching at the prestigious School of Management of the Bocconi University in Milan, recognizing in the new task a service to future generations of international leaders.

Here I am, before you, once again as a Scout, sharing the inheritance of our Founder BP making the best I can to leave this world better than how we found it. Committed with the Scout Movement (and again in the Movement) towards a future of Peace and full social justice.

Here, to feel myself artifice with all of you and the millions of Scout sisters and brothers of the world in the building of a global society where, as should be in our beautiful Movement, all have the right and concrete opportunity to actively and fully participate. Beating down all types of prejudice and rejecting all types of sectarianism, throwing down all those cultural, social, economic and political barriers, that in the present society promote conflicts.

We have, sisters and brothers, a great responsibility:

Of the quality of educational proposal that we are capable of offering to our girls and boys, and our youth, depend the results we will be able to achieve.

From this point of view I would like to highlight the phenomenal contribution from the Interamerican Region through the creation of handbooks and other support instruments to the educational method. A greater achievement that, as I have been able to prove, has been the result of teamwork, what adds merits.

As Scout leaders and educators few know that the process often is worth more than the result itself. The best troop is that which works at the pace of the weakest, stimulating him to improve, and together all members of the troop improve. "The most important is to reach", says a well-known Mexican song. Slowly but surely, today work done is common patrimony.

But it is worthless all educational materials if we do not have trained and motivated adults to adequately apply the method. According to the world strategy (priority,5) it is a manner of promoting a new concept of volunteer work and form a new type of volunteer. It is necessary to attract, recruit and retain a new type of adult of young adult volunteer, intensively committed with values and methods from the Movement. People of this quality need to be disputed from other options that exist in the community. It is useless if we stay with the first that knocks on our door and comes to us because he/she has nothing to do anywhere else and comes to do it here. Works presented at this Conference on "Recruiting, Training and Follow-Up" represents a step forward in this direction.

"We are a movement, not an organization" remember BP, fearing the bureaucratic evolution of the Scout ideal. What should not imply that we resign to insure all the necessary organizational support to Scout groups that form the Movement. This is the task of organizations at the national level, such as the World Organization of the Movement at the global level.

With this end - as well as at the world level in Thessalonica as one of the priorities within the strategy, it was also proposed "An organization for the XXI century" three years ago the Interamerican Region adopted its new policy of institutional development. An important step in the creation of common criteria for the modernization of our associations. For the Movement to grow globally it is necessary to have also its members progress. As I was able to see, many of the problems still evidenced in the Region are originated often in the lack of organizational culture and good administration. And allow me to observe, also the lack of that Scout spirit of trust, loyalty, fraternity that should distinguish all our work.

The application of guidelines approved in Cochabamba will allow overcoming these differences; besides elevating organizational and functional standards of our associations, that will ease in that manner a better coordination and exchange between the associations at the regional and global levels.

Also at the level of World Office "we are attuned" for a profound transformation. We are committed to the construction of one organization, jointed but "one", flexible but strong, young, with an increasing number of young executives, and with new participation mechanisms of the youth in decision making, modern, solid, dynamic, efficient and especially, efficacious organization. Capable of quickly reacting to the continuous transformations of scenario in the context of the globalization process, but at the same time profoundly rooted in tradition and values, that makes Scouting unique.

An organization that helps the Movement for an ever growing number of young persons who can live an extraordinary educational experience of Scouting of excellent quality, that can hear and interpret the concerns and new requirements. of youth in the present, offering hope for the future. For each of them to really be able to feel and act as a "citizen of the world" - as was foreseen, almost 1 00 years ago by BP. A real protagonist of change, builder of Peace; always more a "global citizen" who carries out the Project starting from a full social, economic and political life participation in their local community.

Mns. Helder C;Amara -one of those men that as every scout should feel like from a cc universal" nationality- reminded us that we who had the luck to live under better conditions, to have more culture, more money, more and better experiences... we are not simply privileged, but we have greater responsibilities towards the rest.

We know that the Scout Movement has made the difference in our lives. We then have the moral duty to make everything possible to offer the same opportunity to all girl and boy, to all young person, throughout the world.

On this, it is still BP who talks: "in a great Movement, for a great objective, there is no space for minor personal efforts; we need to abandon small ideas and join our arms in a "team" that allows us to face the whole efficaciously. Cooperation is the only way if we want to reach success".

I believe that the World Bureau may serve as a link and the most appropriate technical support to channel solidarity that needs to direct our policies and our action, to optimize resources and even to favor its search within and outside the Movement. That is why it is fundamental to have all possible information on initiatives of existing cooperation links or under construction, distribute projects, ideas, and information, share initiatives.

The new World Bureau will work with interregional strategy teams and open to expert volunteers and cooperating scout centers.

For the creation of a cooperative environment and insure the interconnection to the inside of the Movement, we must know how to take advantage of modern technology of information and communication. But, within this context, as Scouts, we want to be pioneers, leaders, open new frontiers, exploring and adopting technologies that being appropriate for our tasks, reflect also our principles, and values. The adoption of informational standards open in the world of software, are only an example of the path we have started on.

I am committed to assure maximum transparency in the administration of resources, clearly joining budget to strategy, objectives, results and activities. IN the same manner, for the first time, the World Scout Bureau has a Strategic Planning unit for monitoring and, evaluation, going much further from the limited

vision of mere accounting control, that although it is necessary, it does not say anything about the impact related to our mission.

Everyday I am moved when discovering the miracles that Scouting produces throughout the world. As the example use of the Scout method in the work of social integration of youth in high risk conditions that are being done by you here in El Salvador, as well as Nicaragua or Ecuador. Unfortunately our good actions are not interesting for the media: without deaths, nor scandals, there is no news. It is necessary to communicate our achievements if we want to grow. Raise the profile of Scouting is one of the priorities of the Movement. That is why we just potentiated the external communications area of the World Bureau and we are preparing an articulated communication strategy. For this, we need to have the support of all national organizations, to report systematically on their achievements and help us build an international network of Scout correspondents.

Imagine the communication potential of our Movement when being able to have a strategic alliance of Scout sisters and brothers that work in the media throughout the world. On the other hand, the Guatemalan experience shows us the value of alliance building around positive advertising initiatives.

To comply with our mission, we also need allies among other international and global actors, especially programs and agencies of the United Nations that are closer to our subjects and other movements of civil society that share our vision. We are already credible partners of many organizations of the United Nations system. But also other sectors of society: such as the academic world, public administration and the private entrepreneurial sector. In any case we must carefully choose our allies, having rigorous ethic standards that allow us to select allies, including and especially those who offer us financial contributions based on our values.

With the globalization process, the weight of National States relations has been enormously reduced. As Scouts we have promised to comply with our duty towards our fatherland. Proud of our cultural identity today we are aware that our fatherland is the world, and that our commitment cannot, but be global. In this sense I believe that a Movement that tries to look at and even foresee the future as has already been done by our Founder - must be proposed today with a redefinition of its representative and participative mechanisms. I think about the cultural richness and peculiarity of realities of many Scouts associations that because they are in politically dependent "territories" of far away geographical, social and cultural national States cannot be adequately represented at the level of World Organization ' Here and now, some of those organizations are presented as hostess and not as complete members. I believe that in this direction the Interamerican Region may offer an ideal context of analysis and reflection.

There are many challenges and a long path forward. But as Scouts we know how to face difficulties "singing and whistling" (do not try to do it at the same time). Like I said to the TV reporter who interviewed me yesterday in the

middle of the party "Look, we are the happiest Movement in the world", I don't remember if I added "and this Movement will change the world", but I'm sure I thought about it. Only preserving this joy, this spontaneity, will we be capable of leaving this world a bit better than how we found it.

On the day of my 50th birthday - I could not imagine a better time and environment to celebrate it - one of you came near to congratulate me in my new position and recommend that when going forward and facing some contrasts existing in our Movement literally said: that "vis-@-vis stupidity", I should not take a step back; "now that you have the cross, carry it until the end!"

Sisters and brothers from America, I promise I will do my best, and with your help and confidence, and with God's will, further more. Sisters and brothers from America, count on me!