



Address of Dr. Eduardo Missoni Secretary General of the World Organization of the Scout Movement

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As you know, I have already attended four out of six regional Scout conferences, and I have had several opportunities to meet some of you, so by now I should no longer need to introduce myself as the "new" Secretary General and I can concentrate my speech on the new directions taken and the challenges that lie ahead.

The challenge for the future

The ultimate goal of a Scout is "to leave this world a little better than you found it". This means working for an inclusive society, characterized by social justice and full respect of human rights:

- a world where human progress is respectful of God's creation, promotes the environment and cares for sustainable development and the life of future generations;
- a world of dialogue and cooperation, openness and tolerance;
- a world where the primary interest is in the common good and solidarity;
- a world of peace.

The main task of WOSM is to serve the Scout Movement and achieve its mission by listening, understanding and interpreting the needs of young people and giving a growing number of them, girls and boys, the opportunity to live the unique experience of excellent Scouting, where they become real agents of change for a better world, to be those "citizens of the world" that B-P imagined almost 100 years ago.

To that end we need to work towards making WOSM "one" solid, efficient, effective, dynamic, modern organization, supporting a Scout Movement where young people, women and men enjoy increasing participation in decision-making; a Scout Movement capable of reacting to the rapidly changing scenario of a globalizing world, while remaining deeply rooted in the tradition and values that make Scouting unique.

"One World One Promise" is the theme that will lead us to the centenary celebrations. "One Organisation, serving One Movement" will help us to face the challenges of the XXI century.

At the World Scout Bureau we have already made the first steps in that direction.

Last week here in Cairo we held the first meeting of the newly constituted board of directors. Together we laid the foundations for the progressive integration of our work, to ensure maximum synergy among the central and regional offices.

We identified inter-regional teams and their possible extension to include the work of volunteers in national Scout organizations and collaboration with various Scout centres.

We committed ourselves to sharing knowledge, experience and resources through an integrated planning process that will lead, for the first time in the history of our organization, to a Triennial Plan to be presented to the forthcoming World Scout Conference.

At the same time we will work together to develop a new, worldwide "corporate identity" for WOSM and promote it through a joint communication strategy.

Analysing and sharing our present work and defining the challenging emerging issues, we also identified three areas of common concern in which to develop joint inter-regional projects:

- a review of the Scout programme for adolescents and young adults, with a new focus on the "Rover Section";
- the urgent recruitment and training of adult volunteers;
- supporting the development of institutional and managerial capacities in national Scout organizations.

Rover sections

How do we measure the quality of our work at local, national or global level?

Not by an increase in membership. What if we enrol millions of new Cub Scouts every year but they drop out within one year?

If we want to make a difference, we need to develop "autonomous, supportive and responsible individuals who are capable of contributing effectively to the development of society". This is our Mission.

We can only expect this to be accomplished at the end of the complete personal progression envisaged by the Scout method, possibly from the age when children are able to cooperate within a group (6-7 years) to the age when young people enter adulthood (20-22). But the most critical period remains from adolescence to early adulthood.

The number of young people who graduate from the Rover section and remain a "Scout forever" in their human, professional, social and political commitment is the number that will measure our success and be a possible indicator of our impact on society.

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The recruitment of adult volunteers

To be effective in applying the Scout method, at all ages, we need trained and motivated adults.

Part of the solution may be to have a comprehensive approach through all Scouting programmes and a renewed investment in the Rover section so that we can retain some of them as Scout leaders. But this will take a long time, too long for the challenges we are facing.

It is also vital to attract and recruit other young adult volunteers intensely committed to the values and methods of the Movement.

National Scout organizations for the XXI century

"We are a movement, not an organization", B-P told us when he was concerned about the bureaucratic evolution of Scouting.

But to thrive, the Movement – all members and groups - need to be supported. This is the task of national organizations which in turn need to be supported by the World Organization of the Scout Movement, especially the World Scout Bureau.

Within the framework of the strategic priority "An organization for the XXI century", an important step is the creation of common criteria for the modernization of our associations. For the Movement to grow globally, it is also necessary for its member organizations to progress.

In various regions, many of the problems often have their roots in the lack of organizational culture and good administration. We believe that a special effort is needed to ensure sustained assistance to national organizations that are having difficulty defining or implementing their national plans.

Elevating the organizational and functional standards of national associations will also encourage better inter-regional coordination and exchange. In this respect, the existing Arab-African and Arab-European cooperation programmes are beautiful examples. Let's expand and intensify these kind of initiatives.

A "glo-cal" Movement

At the same time as we recognise the "global" characteristics of our Movement, we cannot forget that our primary commitment is to girls and boys in their communities. More and more today, education in "global citizenship" starts with the promotion of full social, economic and political participation at local community level.

This starts by involving Scouts in community development initiatives as an integral part of our programme, as is common in the Arab Scout Region. The fight against desertification, an important issue in the Arab Region, represents a very good example of an educational initiative that combines a process of individual awareness, local activity and global responsibility.

With the same purpose, Scouting must include, wherever possible, children and young people in difficult circumstances that society has excluded, leaving them in the street, pushing them into violence and crime. I know there are Scout projects working on this problem in this Region.

International Recognition

As we have learned from the report to this conference, much more can be achieved by working in collaboration with other institutions and organisations, at local and global levels. The alliance with some international and global partners, especially programmes and agencies of the United Nations which share our interests, has proven to be of great value; and we must also increase our links with other civil society movements and organizations that share our vision, one example being the alliance of the CEOs of the so-called "Big 7" youth organizations.

We are already credible partners of many organizations of the United Nations system. But a lot more still has to be done for the Scout Movement to acquire the international position it needs and deserves.

While preserving the autonomy of the Movement, we should aim for the widest possible international recognition of the social value of Scouting, thereby earning more support.

Let's put all our efforts into showing that investing in Scouting is an important contribution to the future of humanity.

Let's redouble our efforts to show that social, cultural, political and economical barriers can be overcome, that differences can enrich our lives, that another world is possible: a world of peace.

Let's show that Scouting has made, is making, and will make a difference.

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