



13th African Scout Conference

Report from the Secretary General

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Dear sisters and brothers in Scouting,

When we first met at the African Scout Conference in Mauritius in 2004 I was your "new" Secretary General having only joined the office a few months earlier. Today, it is about three and a half years since I took office and I'd like to share the exciting times we have been living at the World Scout Bureau and the challenges we have before us.

In 2004 we were looking towards 2007 as a fundamental milestone in the history of Scouting, with one theme in mind: **"One World, One promise"**.

The vision I proposed to the World Scout Committee and shared with you was therefore one of **"One" Organization serving "One" Movement**, sharing that Promise.

As Philippe reported, the World Scout Committee has worked as a united team, and unity of the Movement was identified by the World Scout Conference as the main focus of the Governance review.

Promoting the unity of the Movement is the first constitutional purpose of the World Organisation and therefore of all its members, at all levels.

Unity has been the focus as well in the strategical reorganisation of the World Scout Bureau, aiming at better supporting and promoting Scouting worldwide.

Central and regional structures have been aligned in terms of functions and responsibilities, looking for synergy and an optimisation of resources. The WSB's Board of Directors, which includes all Regional Directors, ensures strategical and programmatic coordination, as well as progressive corporate integration.

Following the recommendation of the World Scout Conference, the average age of executive staff has been lowered by more than 10 years. Younger executives are progressively empowered and steps forward are being made in terms of gender and geo-cultural balance, however never sacrificing professional competence: professional competence has oriented the restructuring process of the WSB at Central and Regional levels.

No organisational arrangement will ensure unity, unless aspects such as goals, plans, methods and resources are fully shared. This year, for the first time in the history of the WSB, the activities implemented by all offices (central and regional) were based on an integrated **Yearly Operational Plan** developed according to a single **Triennial Global Plan**. For the time being, this could only be produced by compiling the pre-existing regional plans, but we expect to be able to generate the next Triennial Plan as an integrated output of regional and global inputs to the World Scout Conference.

Good planning can only be the result of evaluation and lessons learned. Therefore, the WSB engaged itself in an overall **evaluation** of the work done since April 2004. The exercise involved all the staff in all offices of the WSB and results will obviously contribute to future planning.

In another historical step, we are now standardising the format of all offices' periodical reporting to feed integrated Quarterly Management Reports to the WSC. And I am sure you'll be happy to know that a strategically oriented **Annual Report of the Secretary General**, integrating outcome information from all Regions, will now be distributed to all NSOs and key stakeholders at the end of each fiscal year; the first to be published in the coming month of October.

Unity is also fostered through a strong visual corporate identity. Let me highlight the achievements made in this area. "**One Scout.org**" represents a historical turning point, and **Regional Communications Fora** have supported NSOs to discover and use the full potential of the adoption and the coordinated use of the **New brand**.

The first "**World Scouting Report**", focussed on "Youth, a social force", was launched globally in cooperation with representatives of the UN in Geneva, and conveys an important message to the international community as part of our **focussed external relations strategy** for the repositioning of World Scouting.

To consolidate and grow, the Scout Movement needs more resources. Taking advantage both of the advances in the area of communications and of the adoption of a new approach to projects, partnerships have been established with external donors, including and increasingly from the private sector. Partners must both demonstrate appropriate **ethical and social responsibility** standards, and coincide with our priorities and plans in order to avoid that our activities become "donor driven". This is a challenging and growing area of work and support to Scouting in Africa is a central objective of our negotiations. We now tackle the issue in strict coordination between Geneva and the African Regional Office which as a result of the courageous restructuring undergone during the last year, has considerably improved its competence in the field of Project management and its accountability.

In fact, in Africa, a number of ongoing partnerships with governmental development agencies and private sponsors have suffered from previous lack of clear criteria for allocation and management of funds. Among them the Jacobs Leadership Project, which is now being reviewed in agreement with the donor, after the rather negative results of the external evaluation of the first phase, supported by the Jacobs Foundation with one million dollars presented, as you will remember to this Conference in 2004. I am confident that the African Regional Office of the World Scout Bureau has now the capacity to fully regain credibility and to respond to the highest expectations of donors.

Notwithstanding the enormous effort to modernise the organisation, in line with Strategic priorities 6 and 7, our "**core business**" is education. On the long run this is how we make a difference. "Creating a better world" expresses our vision and the Strategy toward that goal is the education of young people through Scouting. The Strategy adopted by the World Scout Conference since 2002, however, cannot be effective without the convinced and strong commitment of all NSOs to its implementation. The five identified educational Strategic Priorities, i.e. **Youth involvement**, special attention to the **adolescents**, the full engagement of an increasing number of **volunteers**, **reaching out** to those most in need and ensuring full and fair participation in Scouting to both **girls and boys, women and men**, must be streamlined across the Scout programme and orient actions and organizational arrangements NSOs put in place to implement it. The WSB has been putting a lot of energy in supporting you in this endeavour, with technical assistance, training and the production of specific tools. Your feed-back however is strongly needed to orient further action. I am looking forward to the specific session and workshops later this week that will help us all to better understand where we are with the implementation of the Strategy in all its aspects and priorities, and the way forward.

As you can well imagine, a lot has been invested into making this **centennial year** a real success. Thanks to the effort we made in putting in place the Communication and branding strategy we were prepared to harvest the opportunity offered by the centenary, and we started the new century of Scouting with renewed enthusiasm and commitment. Hundreds of inspirational **Gifts for Peace** were presented at the **Scouting's Sunrise** on 1 August, among those let me mention just one: Amahoro/Amani, Peace education in this Great Lakes area. "A scout is a brother and a sister to every other Scout" and Amahoro/Amani is a concrete example of how this article of the Scout law can inspire our action in building Peace even in most conflictive settings. An example, for the entire world, of local and international cooperation between Scouts, beyond all possible barriers, also made possible through the support and active engagement of the World Scout Bureau in resource mobilisation. Also a good example of our increasing **cooperation with WAGGGS** at global, regional and local level. Let me give a special thank to all those who made it a success.

It has not be registered as a gift for peace, but the challenging unification of Burkina Faso's Scouting into a single National Association, achieved also with the support of the WSB, certainly represents an example to be followed in all those countries where Scouting is suffering divisions and some times open confrontation between opposite factions, which evidently has nothing to do with Scouting and destroys the credibility of our claim for peace.

Also the centennial **World Scout Jamboree** helped to reaffirm the unique role Scouting may play in today's society. With 40.000 participants from all the 155 countries where there are recognised NSOs the Jamboree surely achieved the objective of reaffirming Scouting's world brotherhood. The **World Congress** to be held in Geneva in November, the last world event of the centennial celebrations, will confront top researchers with the Scouting experience and offer an additional evidence of the contribution of hundred years of Scouting to non-formal education and to Society at large.

There is much more to come. I'll be happy to share more information with you and look forward to your comments and suggestions.

Let me conclude renewing my full support and trust to the African Regional Director. She may not have lived the Scouting experience in her childhood and young adulthood, but there are no doubts about her Scout spirit and values and today she can proudly wear the Scout scarf she received when taking the Scout promise earlier this year. Only our sincere commitment to live up to the values of the Scout promise and Law give us the authority to speak in the name of Scouting; not the uniform, or the badges we wear, nor alone the position we occupy in the Organisation. Let me praise and encourage the volunteers and the staff that in the same spirit have engaged with integrity and perseverance in supporting the Regional Office in its challenging endeavour for the benefit of Scouting in Africa over the last year.

Finally I wholeheartedly thank all of the staff of the WSB and the wide network of volunteers that are contributing worldwide to this exciting adventure, often making the impossible possible, thanks to their admirable dedication and Scout spirit.