

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE APPU/UPU REFORM WORKING GROUP

Report by the Working Group Chair, New Zealand

1. Subject Informing Congress on the outcomes of the APPU/UPU Reform Working Group Meeting.	References/Paragraphs §§ 1-4
2. Decision expected Congress is asked to: note the report of the meeting	 §§ 1-4

1. Introduction

The APPU/UPU Reform Working Group Meeting met at 14:00 Bangkok time on Tuesday, 30 August 2022 at the 13th APPU Congress, held in Bangkok, Thailand.

1.1. The following APPU member countries participated in meeting:

Australia, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand (Chair), Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Tonga, Viet Nam, and Vanuatu.

Also, in attendance were member countries participating online, representatives of the APPU Bureau led by the APPU Secretary General Mr. LIN Hongliang, and Congress observers.

This was the final APPU/UPU Reform Working Group of the 2017-2022 Tehran Congress cycle and was delivered as a final update and information sharing exercise. There were no decisions expected or made during this meeting.

2. The agenda covered the following matters.

2.1. The agenda and its adoption

The agenda for the meeting comprised the following items:

- Agreeing and adopting the agenda
- Background on the Reform Working Group
- What we did
- What we did well
- What we didn't do well
- What we learnt
- Guidance/suggestions to the 2022-2026 Reform Working Group
- Any other business

The Chair presented the agenda and meeting running order which was adopted without comment. The introductory comments noted that the meeting would hear some of the agenda items “blended” or drawn together to make for a more coherent and informative flow.

3. Presentation

The chair was joined on the podium by Mr Mark Lawley, APPU Reform Consultant, and the presentation was delivered jointly with the chair outlining major points and themes, with Mr Lawley then completing the picture adding important detail, clarification, elaboration and expansion on key points.

3.1. Background

The meeting heard of the concerns of the Secretary-General that much of the focus of the Union was on the College. Whilst training is very important, it is not the only function of the Union, and we had to ask ourselves if there was enough emphasis on the other roles and functions of the APPU. Is the APPU doing all that it should as a Restricted Union, and was it delivering value to the members of the Union? These were difficult question to both ask and answer – but it had to be done. Further to this, there was an underlying concern that some of the merger of the APPU Administrative Section and Training College in 2001 may not have been fully concluded. Given this, work was required.

3.2. What we did

This agenda item started with the Workstream 1 and its 36 initiatives given to the working group and the commencement of the Tehran cycle, some of which remain to complete. This was followed by Workstream 2 and a further nine initiatives, of which a final three are under action and will be completed by end-2022. Workstream 3 identified 37 tasks on management tools for the Bureau, all have been completed. And finally, Workstream 4 on the review of organizational, structural and resources some of which we fully completed, whilst new tasks on the Consultancy Section and the High-Level Strategic Discussion were added to the work and were also completed.

It was noted that in totality, there were at least 308 discrete tasks, activities or issues allocated to the Reform Working Group and/or the Reform Consultant in a five-year period – a significant body of work by any measure.

We then further considered this work, looking at specific callouts or highlighting activities, broken into annual outcomes for 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 – the last being a significant role in Congress preparations, organization, and execution.

3.3. What we did well

We then briefly discussed the reactive and responsive nature of the approach to the work that was allocated to the working group. We noted that the approach was practical rather than theoretical, i.e., showing and doing, as opposed to suggesting and advising. The approach was on doing work and leaving a template or approach to repeat comparable work; a delivered outcome and a means by which the Bureau could then repeat similar work without further external guidance and support, creating greater self-sufficiency.

3.4. What we didn't do well

Any review of work must be full, frank, open and honest. We recognized that there were areas in which our work could improve. Workload management was problematic as the working group continued to accept and action work items at the cost of other work which was deprioritized. This, coupled with key resources – primarily the Reform Consultant – resulted in work overload.

3.5. What we learnt

Almost half the work accepted by the working group was not originally planned, but was additional and outside scope, but it needed to be done, often urgently, and the decision was taken to accept and progress as quickly and as completely as possible.

It was also acknowledged that planned work identified further issues and additional work items, and these additional items were also added to the work plan for the working group as related / inter-related activities also requiring resolution.

Perhaps validating the need for the working group was that, by far and away, the Bureau was the clear benefactor of the work on Reform; management processes and tools for the Bureau were deployed. Some examples of this point being that policy on Reserve Funds for the Administration Section and the Training Section were developed and implemented, and Foreign Exchange Management rules were established.

3.6. Guidance/suggestions to the 2022-2026 reform Working Group

Some general observations were shared, such as, be prepared for and allow capacity to answer unknown/unexpected issues that inevitably do arise. Continue the focus on the five pillars of the reform of the APPU:

- Financial
- Legal
- Organizational
- Directional
- Capability and capacity

4. **Any other business**

The floor was opened, and some further useful discussion followed:

Australia acknowledged the work on introducing gender-neutral language into the APPU governing documents as a positive first step.

China made a generous intervention acknowledging the excellent work of Mr Lawley in progressing the reform agenda, highlighting a list of significant contributions to APPU Reform.

The chair then made some brief closing comments, thanking the Working Group members for their active participation, contribution and commitment to the work on APPU Reform. The chair also acknowledged the important contributions and support from Mr LIN the APPU Secretary General, Ms Kwanjai Kajornwuttideth, and the other members of the APPU Bureau Team. Finally, the chair made note of the significant and substantial contribution of Mr Lawley over the entire 5-year period of the Working Group, further noting that without Mr Lawley's efforts the Working Group would not have made the substantial progress on the APPU Reform agenda that it had achieved.

The meeting closed at 15:40.