

A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

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Dear Members

I am pleased to tell you that at the International Interim Board Meeting held recently in Windsor, UK, the Soroptimist International Board (4 Officers and 3 Voting delegates from each Federation) made a cooperative and collaborative commitment to move forward in a strategic manner to ensure that SI fulfils its vision as a vibrant and dynamic organization for today's professional and business women. We owe a great deal of gratitude to the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) for two years of work which culminated in our first ever strategic plan.

Round Table discussions were held to discuss the recommendations presented in the SPG report. The Round Table Groups reported the results of their discussions and submitted amendments to the recommendations. The Board subsequently approved a motion which referred the Strategy and Business Plan to the Board for further refinement and development. The SI Board unanimously approved the following:

VISION

Soroptimist International is a vibrant, dynamic organisation for today's professional and business women. We are committed to a world where women and girls together achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide.

MISSION

Soroptimists inspire action and create opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls through a global network of members and international partnerships.

(Note: shorter Mission than the one discussed and agreed on in Glasgow)

VALUES

- Human rights for all
- Global peace and international goodwill
- Advancing women's potential
- Integrity and democratic decision making
- Volunteering, diversity and friendship

GOAL 1 – PROGRAMME

Soroptimists will ensure that women and girls enjoy equality, live in safe and healthy environments, have access to education and have leadership and practical skills.

Objectives:

1. Eliminate poverty and gender discrimination through ensuring women's full social and economic rights.
2. End human trafficking and all forms of violence against women and girls.
3. Ensure access to health care for women and girls.
4. Support programmes and policies that eliminate HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis and other major diseases.
5. Improve access to clean water, sanitation and essential food resources.
6. Mitigate the effects of climate change and integrate sustainability into personal choices and government policies and programmes.
7. Meet the needs of women and girls during and after armed conflicts and disasters.
8. Promote peaceful conflict resolution, intercultural and inter-racial tolerance and condemn all forms of genocide and terrorism.
9. Ensure equal access to education and training for women and girls throughout their lifespan.
10. Assure women's advancement in management, politics and decision making.

GOAL 2 – INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Soroptimist International will have a vibrant, flexible and responsive membership, with an international point of connection, committed to the delivery of its vision and mission.

Objectives:

1. Increase members' engagement
2. Provide unique and relevant membership benefits
3. Increase membership
4. Ensure that members connect with SI and are its ambassadors

GOAL 3 - STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

SI is a strategic organisation with dynamic and proactive leadership at all levels, able to deliver results and ensure its vision is achieved.

Objectives:

1. Manage performance effectively
2. Promote efficient decision making
3. Practise effective governance
4. Develop leadership capacity

GOAL 4 – RESOURCES

Mobilization of Resources

Through the strength of its worldwide membership, SI secures resources to ensure the success of its projects, campaigns and strategic aims/goals.

Objectives:

1. Increase project and campaign funding
2. Improve strategic financial planning and control

GOAL 5 – EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

SI engages in high impact projects and campaigns consistent with its mission.

Objectives:

1. Identify and establish strategic partnerships
2. Provide evidence of impact of projects and campaigns
3. Demonstrate added value to SI of working in partnerships
4. Develop a Soroptimist sponsored and managed project implemented worldwide by local clubs.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS AS DISCUSSED BY THE GROUPS AND ADOPTED FOR FURTHER ACTION BY THE BOARD ARE AS FOLLOWS:

PROGRAMME

Recommendation 3

Adopt the new Programme Focus Report Form developed at the 2008 SI Board Meeting by the Programme Team which features revision of the Programme Focus Report form and corresponding database modifications that reflect 2007-2011 Programme Focus Objectives made by the programme voting delegates. The Board also authorises the SI Programme Team to regularly review this Programme Focus Report form and make necessary changes as required to reflect programme focus and reporting needs.

Recommendation 4

That SI develops a new Soroptimist International Long Term Project to take the place of the SI Quadrennial Project.

The project design will be the responsibility of the executive programme team (Programme Director, Assistant Programme Director, Administrative Officer/Programme and the 4 Federation Programme Directors/Liaisons) and will include:

- implementation and participation guidelines
- global reporting system and documentation of impact
- periodic evaluation

Timeline for implementation will include:

- presentation of the project design and process for selection of choices at the 2009 SI Board meeting
- approval of the final selection of the SI Long Term Project at the Interim SI Board Meeting in 2010
- launch at the 2011 Soroptimist Convention in Montréal to include immediate opportunities for participation by all clubs world wide
- celebration of the project's accomplishments in 2021 during SI's centenary year.

Recommendation 5

That SI approve the decade 2011-2021 to have a specific focus of 'Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women and Girls' which takes SI through to celebrating a century of service. The Programme Team to bring proposals as to how this will be managed to the 2009 Board Meeting.

PARTNERSHIPS

Recommendation 6

That SI produces a contract template for all potential partnerships, referencing items such as goals, roles and responsibilities, timelines, financial and reporting commitments, communications and publicity arrangements.

It is recommended that the template be produced by SI Headquarters in consultation with the Procedural Consultant and Constitution Committee to be submitted to the SI Board by August 2009. Once approved, the template should be made available on the SI website.

Recommendation 7

That SI develops a set of criteria and guidelines for use by the SI membership with the purpose of encouraging the development of partnerships for action and advocacy that advance SI's mission and overall strategic goals. These guidelines to be developed by a task force comprising the Programme Team, Quadrennial Project Liaison and SI Executive Officer and submitted to the SI Board at the 2009 Final Board Meeting for approval; the guidelines to be included in the SI Procedures and made available on the SI website.

Recommendation 8

That SI establishes a list of existing and potential partners, all of whom have the capacity to contribute to the achievement of SI's strategic goals and to the development of the organisation.

The list of partners to be made available to SI membership in the form of a secure online database linked to the SI website. Clubs who form partnerships with organisations on the list could add brief details of the partnership to the database.

It is recommended that a task force be set up to address all issues associated with the establishment of such a list, including but not limited to, partnership approval process, researching and drawing up a list of potential partners, capital and maintenance costs of a central database; this task force to include the Programme Director, Finance Committee, a representative from each Federation and SI Headquarters. The report of the taskforce should be presented to the SI Board no later than August 2009.

MEMBERSHIP

Recommendation 9

That under the leadership of the Chair and members of the Extension Committee, and with the support of the Constitution & Resolutions Committee, Soroptimist International broadens the title and remit of the Extension Chair and Committee to include strategic support for recruitment and retention. The constitutional provisions and amended Terms of Reference to be brought to the final Board Meeting 2009.

Recommendation 10

That under the leadership of the Chair and members of the Extension Committee and with the support of the Finance Committee, a Strategic Plan for extension, recruitment and retention, together with projected costs, is developed and presented to the Final Board Meeting 2009.

Recommendation 11

That the Extension Committee be directed to take a strategic world view of extension and recruitment and analyse countries' readiness for extension efforts based upon criteria to include:

1. Stability of the area
2. Stability of economy
3. The presence of other NGOs

4. The status of women in the area
5. Political climate

These criteria are to be used to recommend priorities for extension and recruitment. In conjunction with the Finance Committee, present a business plan for this project at the Final Board Meeting 2009.

Recommendation 12

That the Extension Committee identifies both the current and future unique benefits of membership of a Soroptimist International Club and develops a paper which can be used as part of a global membership package to attract and retain members. The paper to be brought to the 2009 Board Meeting for approval.

Recommendation 13

A webpage be developed by the Extension Committee to provide a link to appropriate and relevant leadership training materials both within and outside the organisation, to be approved by the Board and operational by 31 August 2009, and that the Extension Committee produce a strategy for developing leadership capacity across the organisation for discussion and approval at the SI Board 2009.

Recommendation 14

That the Constitution & Resolutions Committee review Articles X and XII of the SI Constitution and consider whether the rotational systems described for Treasurer and Committee Chairs are fit for purpose in the 21st century, taking into account the principles of fairness and competency, and if not fit for purpose, bring proposals for change along with the proposed Constitutional changes to the Final Board meeting of 07/09 biennium for consideration by the Board: such recommendations to include timelines for implementation so that no current nominated persons are disenfranchised.

Recommendation 15

That the SI Officers with the support of the Finance Committee establish the content for orientation, leadership, and general training for SI post-holders and present it for adoption at the Final Board meeting of the 07/09 biennium, and that in the future, this content be considered for potential application at other levels of SI.

Recommendation 16

That an Ad Hoc Committee be established with the support of the Constitution & Resolutions Committee to develop recommendations for a process and tools to be used annually by the SI Board to measure its performance in the evaluation and implementation of the strategic plan, and present these recommendations at the Final 2009 Board meeting.

Recommendation 17

In accordance with SI PPP 5.5, 'Guidelines for SI Ad Hoc Committees', establish an Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by the Constitution & Resolutions Chair to review job descriptions for all SI post-holders to ensure they contain:

- Description of responsibilities
- Performance expectations
- Measurement standards for performance expectations, and
- Protocols for accountability

The Committee should provide a report to the Board along with proposed recommended changes to the Final Board Meeting of 07-09 biennium.

Recommendation 18

That a 'parking lot' be established to capture important ideas and suggestions for future consideration.

FINANCE**Recommendation 19**

That the Board approve the following reserve funds policy:

That a minimum of one year's operating costs be held in reserve to facilitate the smooth running and, if applicable, the winding up of the organisation. The amount held on reserve to reflect a combination of the balances of the restricted and unrestricted funds at 31 December each year. This reserve would be used to ensure funding for:

- Staff salaries including pensions and national insurance contributions
- Staff redundancy costs
- Property Tax (Council Tax)
- Property Insurance
- Utility Costs (heat, light and power)
- Accountants Fees
- Audit Fees
- Legal Fees
- Bank Charges
- Directors' Liability Insurance
- Officers' Travel Expenses for meeting purposes
- Final Board Meeting Costs
- Tax Liabilities

Recommendation 20

That the Finance Committee review and revise current financial systems to ensure that they are consistent with current best practice for similar organisations.

Recommendation 21

That the Finance Committee provide a Strategic Financial Plan to support the SI Strategy & Business Plan.

Recommendation 22

That SI investigates acquiring status (Trust, Foundation, Charity) that would allow the receipt of funds from other sources to promote the SI goals by the following method:

- a. Project to be led by the SI Finance Committee and Chair, with support and input from the Constitution & Resolutions Committee and Programme Team.
- b. Project to investigate the best geographical and fiscal base for the 'status' and the scope of the objects of such status and determine the appropriate rules and governance.
- c. Project lead to bring findings to the 2009 Board Meeting. The findings will contain a Business Plan, appropriate documentation to achieve such status and proposed changes to the Constitution/SI PPPs.

IDENTITY, BRANDING, REPRESENTATION, LEADERSHIP**Recommendation 23**

Create a web-based interactive diagram to illustrate the organisational structure at the international level. This will be developed by the staff at SIHQ and will be available on the SI website by August 2009.

Recommendation 24

Develop information on Soroptimist International that will be suitable for orientation purposes. This will be created by staff at SI and will be available on the SI website by August 2009.

Recommendation 25

Raise members' awareness of the concept of branding through a series of communication tools, including the SI website, by using and adapting existing resources. This will be available by January 2009 and will be coordinated by the SI PR Liaison.

Recommendation 26

That the PR Liaison in consultation with the Executive Officer engage a design consultant to develop a corporate identity for the organisation within the time frame indicated, for agreement at the 2009 Board Meeting, launch in 2010 and have this ready for use by 2011. Have a budgetary limit set by the Board prior to seeking proposals from professional design specialists.

Recommendation 27

Create an Ad Hoc Committee, led by the Public Relations Liaison, with representatives from each Federation to work with the design consultant and test out designs. Members will be engaged in the development process through the SI Website. The final choice will remain with the Board. An implementation strategy will be produced by the Ad Hoc Committee to ensure consistent use of the corporate identity at all levels.

Members of the SI Committees were assigned the approved recommendations with a report of progress to the Final Board Meeting of the 2007-09 Biennium to be held in July/Aug. 2009

You will note that Motion 18 has a recommendation to establish a 'parking lot' – A parking lot is a place to store and not lose the many ideas that were brought forward during the Meeting and will be available for future discussion.

Members of the Board under the direction of the President made a commitment to take these recommendations forward with specific timelines so that a Strategic Plan for the organization can be implemented at the start of the next biennium 2009-2011.

I thank all the SI Board Voting Members and SI Officers for their commitment to this Strategic Plan, together with the Programme Director and the Chairs of the various committees for their commitment to work in unison for the future of the organization.

The Windsor Board Meeting was a historic occasion. The Board and Officers wish to ensure that the spirit in which we discussed and accepted the recommendations is

sustained, so that Soroptimists will continue to inspire action and create opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls through a global network of members and international partnerships.

Kind regards
In friendship

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margaret Lobo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Margaret Lobo
International President

4 September 2008