

January 2012

Dear National Secretaries,
cc: Area Coordinators, SI Committees

Greetings from EXCO!

Since being elected in September 2009, EXCO has focused on some of the key decisions made by the GA:

- ServasOnLine
- Area meetings, Area Coordinator elections and Distant Votes
- Host List Reliability
- Development
- Administer levies and revenues
- Peacebuilding and Youth development

Servas Activities have increased in parts of the Servas world, including in the Americas; in other areas, traveller numbers are down. A ServasOnLine prototype has been developed. Important data policy issues are being studied by an international group who will make recommendations to the next GA. The existing Dolphin system and Host List Storage Area have significantly improved our ability to share host information with travellers, especially with the completion of the 2010 Host List Reliability Project. A new server has been installed and provides a strong basis for the future. The Distant Vote process has been successfully implemented. The ICT Committee has been strengthened to fill vacancies. Important international meetings have been held in Central and South America, Asia and Africa and national groups have worked together to meet or prepare meetings in Nordic Countries, Netherlands and elsewhere. Peacebuilding workshops have been held both in person and from a distance using technology. Area elections have been held for all defined Areas requesting Area Coordinators. Communications are now being routinely sent in both Spanish and English.

Slowness in forwarding Stamps revenues or returning the unused stamps, by several countries, has delayed international book keeping and the presentation of the 2010 Audit and 2012 Budget. Another issue delaying the presentation of SI financial data for 2010 is the complexity of gathering the ServasOnLine contributions from all eligible countries. EXCO has interpreted the budget decisions made by the 2009 GA into annual “operational budgets” each year, to manage cash flow carefully. This has avoided an unacceptable deficit. However it also means there have been disappointingly few resources to support executive participation at Area or regional meetings.

The location and dates for the 2012 General Assembly are almost final. Preparations have begun for the GA agenda and member countries have been asked for their motions. This intense work preceding the GA will continue until we meet together.

EXCO has felt the deep loss of our second SI Peace Secretary with the passing on Luisa Corbetta in October 2011. We have welcomed Danielle Serres as the new SI Peace Secretary.

Attached is a more detailed update about EXCO activities since the December 2010 status report.

In peace,

Servas International EXCO

Gary Sealey, President
Pramod Kumar, Vice President
Mirek Wasilewski, Treasurer

Penny Pattison, General Secretary
Pablo Colangelo, Host List Coordinator
Danielle Serres, Peace Secretary

Servas International Executive Committee (EXCO) December 2011 Status Report

You may wonder how the six-person EXCO volunteers manage to deal with the many tasks and issues that occur each day in Servas! While we each work, on average, several hours each day for Servas, Servas is also supported by other wonderful volunteers around the world.

During 2011, the EXCO team met by teleconference or Skype about every 3 weeks. The minutes from the meetings are all posted on the Siexco web site. In addition, we all receive 10 to 40 emails each day about various Servas things. We have developed a way to make decisions using email discussion and voting between meetings. We did not have a face-to-face meeting in 2011, and while we continued with our SI work, it did impact our ability to devote longer periods of sustained work on the strategic issues around Servas and our future. We are planning to meet together early in 2012.

Luisa Corbetta's illness and death affected EXCO significantly in 2011.

We continue to add information to the Siexco web site all the time. Please send an email to generalsecretary@servas.org if you see any errors, or have other information that you think would be useful to display on this site. You can find this report and other information about EXCO and Servas International in the "Secretary" section of the Servas International Administrative web site www.siexco.org (or go directly to http://www.servas.org/siexco/index.php/Annual_Report_materials).

Highlights of Accomplishments in 2011:

ServasOnLine

- A ServasOnLine working prototype has been developed by Matthew, a Russian Servas volunteer, and installed on the Servas computer server; the prototype is being reviewed and tested.
- A ServasOnLine Expert Panel to guide the project has been assembled and has met. The Panel is studying important data policy issues, which will be taken as recommendations to the next GA.
- Central to the current vision ServasOnLine is a recognizable, consistent internet presence, with servas.org, [Siexco.org](http://siexco.org) and ServasOnLine sharing an easy to use, friendly 'look and feel'
- No money was spent on the ServasOnLine project in 2011 despite all the work done on this project.

SI Areas:

- South, Central West Asia: an Area Coordinator election was held, and resulted in a tie; this was amicably resolved, and Muhammad Naseem is the new Area Coordinator; a SCW Asia area meeting was held in Sri Lanka in December 2011
- Africa: an area meeting was held in Uganda July 30-August 6, 2011 with substantial financial support from Servas International and from some Servas national groups; at the meeting, the group decided to unite as one area called Africa, and chose Moses Kigozi as the Area Coordinator
- Central America: an El Salvador national group was established
- South America: work continues on developing Servas

Distant Vote

- Nov 2010 Distant Vote
 - final report received and posted
 - recommendation to review Distant Vote schedule is being prepared for the 2012 GA
- May 2011 Distant Vote was cancelled since there were no motions
- Nov 2011 Distant Vote
 - motions published, vote held and results published

Host Lists

- Key Dolphin continues to be the valuable repository of Servas country key person and host list information. With the installation of the new server, there is a problem with the Forwarding function. It is hoped that this will be solved quickly.
- 46 countries have a total of over 4500 host listings in Host Dolphin in December 2011
- Host List Storage Area statistics to December 2011:
 - 69 countries have their Host List updated to 2011
 - 30 countries have their Host List updated to 2010
 - 23 Countries have a Host List older than 2010 (12 of them are Member Groups)
 - There are now only 4 countries that do not have their host list in the Host List Storage Area (Britain, Japan, Canada and Germany)
- The following countries allow their Host Lists to be transmitted in electronic format to travellers (EF). (For all the other countries you must use paper format only.):

ARGENTINA	GREECE	RUSSIA
ARMENIA	HONDURAS	SENEGAL
AUSTRALIA	HONG KONG	SLOVAKIA
AUSTRIA	HUNGARY	SOUTH AFRICA
BELGIUM AND LUX.	ICELAND	SOUTH KOREA
BERMUDA	INDONESIA	SRI LANKA
BOTSWANA	IRAN	SURINAME
BRAZIL	ISRAEL	SWEDEN
BULGARIA	LIBERIA	TAIWAN
CAMBODIA	MALAYSIA	TANZANIA
CAMEROON	MAURITIUS	THAILAND
CHINA	MEXICO	TOGO
COLOMBIA	MONGOLIA	TURKEY
CONGO	NEW ZEALAND	URUGUAY
BRAZZAVILLE	NIGERIA	USA
CONGO KINSHASA	NORWAY	VENEZUELA
CROATIA	PAKISTAN	VIETNAM
CYPRUS	PARAGUAY	ZAMBIA
ETHIOPIA	POLAND	ZIMBABWE
FINLAND	PORTUGAL	
GEORGIA	ROMANIA	

Peace Activities

- Luisa Corbetta made a presentation to the UNHCR in March 2011 and sent out her September 2011 letter
- Danielle Serres was appointed by EXCO as the new SI Peace Secretary in December 2011
- Peace courses have been offered at national and area meetings, with others planned
- UN meetings being attended by the Servas UN Observers and others; 2012 appointments have begun

Financial

- 2010 Accounts have been closed, and the Audit report is being finalized
- 2011 Stamp fee payments have been received; some remain outstanding and others need to be clarified
- Some 2011 ServasOnLine levy have been received, but again some remains outstanding; the same still applies to 2010 ServasOnLine levy
- 2012 Stamps have been sent out to the 39 countries who have requested them
- The bookkeeping process, which is outsourced, is complicated by the global scope of our activities
- Work has begun on the 2012 budget

SI Committees (http://www.servas.org/siexco/index.php/SI_Committees)

- The Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) Team has been appointed; the convener is Michael Silbert, Canada. They have managed the transition to a new server, set up system administration procedures, handled several hardware failures, and are working to make our technical infrastructure more robust.
- The Development Committee submitted their 2010 Report (see http://www.servas.org/siexco/index.php/SI_Committees#Development_Committee)
- The Job Description and Statutes Committee have published job descriptions for SI positions (see http://www.servas.org/siexco/index.php/SI_Committees#Job_Description_and_Statutes_Committee)
- In May 2011 the Monthly SI News was reborn and revitalized under the leadership of editor Terry Stone, NS Servas Greece, and several well-received issues have been published (see <http://www.servas.org/siexco/index.php/Newsletters>)
- The SI Committee list has been updated and published (see http://www.servas.org/siexco/index.php/SI_Committees)

Youth

- The 2011 SI Youth conference was held in combination with the Africa Area meeting, 30 July – 6 August in Uganda
- A Nordic Youth meeting August 1 – 4, 2011 was held in Denmark (see the meeting report in the Nov-Dec 2011 SI News)
- The ‘Families in Servas’ project has been initiated, and was discussed at the Nordic youth meeting
- Many successful Servas Youth Language Experiences (SYLEs) have occurred

Administration

- SI registration: analysis indicated that registration in Switzerland would be problematic; the November 2011 Distant Vote approved investigation of alternatives to registration in Switzerland
- Created and filled a Spanish Translation Coordinator position (shared by Dinorah Sanz and Ana Manghi)
- 2010 Annual Reports: 44 out of 80 received and posted at http://www.servas.org/siexco/index.php/Annual_Report_2010
- The Action Chart for 2009 GA decisions has been updated and published (see http://www.servas.org/siexco/index.php/Annual_Report_materials#2009_Servas_International_General_Assembly_Decisions)
- Preparations for the 2012 GA are underway, and are a priority for EXCO

Status Report on ‘Plans for January to June 2011’ published in December 2010 Status Report

- ServasOnLine progress – some progress has been made
- Redesign www.servas.org web site – delayed in favour of establishing monthly SI News; now planned to be part of ServasOnLine
- Regular SI Newsletters – done. Monthly newsletters begun in new format and under new editor
- SI Registration – Analysis of options to move forward following Nov 2011 Distant Vote motion
- South, Central West Asia Area Coordinator election – completed
- Europe and Near East Area review – not yet begun
- Finalize motions for November 2011 Distant Vote - done
- Host List Reliability Team support to countries with low reliability – work has been done with various countries and plans are being made for the 2012 survey
- Investigation of Host List electronic access options for increased security – discussion paper produced
- Set up working group to move forward into the digital age in creative and active ways (GA2009-9-11 14) – not yet begun as a separate initiative, although this overlaps with the ServasOnLine Expert Panel
- Complete 2010 financial statements – completed, to be taken to 2012 GA for approval
- Budget and Audit Committees review 2012 budget and Financial Operating Procedures – not completed
- Development committee – support countries, grants, focal meetings, etc... - ongoing work progresses
- The ICT Team has been appointed - done
- ICT review of server needs and contract – done

- Final preparations for 2011 Youth meeting in Uganda - done
- Create Youth Travel Award committee – not done
- Add Youth resource section to www.servas.org and Servas youth web sites – not done
- Add Family page and discussion forum to www.servas.org web site – in progress
- Create Policy and Procedures Working Group and draft Policy and Procedures manual – minimal work done
- Create Proxy Voting Working Group and draft proxy voting definition - started
- Updated Servas International Job Descriptions – done
- SI Committee list updated and published - done

Plans for January to August 2012

The GA Action Chart (see

http://www.servas.org/siexco/index.php/Annual_Report_materials#2009_Servas_International_General_Assembly_Decisions), describes the action plans for the 2009 GA decisions. Work is also continuing in EXCO and the SI Committees on their normal activities.

Highlights:

- Plan and hold the 2012 GA
- Establish Subject Working Groups to prepare for the 2012 GA
- ServasOnLine progress for discussion at 2012 GA
- Further work on SI Registration in preparation for 2012 GA
- Host List Reliability Team 2012 survey
- Continued work on Host List electronic access
- Development committee – support countries, grants, focal meetings, etc...
- Regular SI Newsletters
- Youth Travel Award committee progress
- Add Family page and discussion forum to www.servas.org web site
- Policy and Procedures Working Group draft Policy and Procedures manual
- Proxy Voting Working Group draft proxy voting definition
- Budget proposals for 2013-2015 to be presented to 2012 GA

Respectfully submitted by

Servas International EXCO

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