



Servas Monthly News 23



May 2007

Distant Voting

With the ease of communication available now it is possible for organisations such as Servas to get decisions made with responses from all over the world in a relatively short time. No longer do we have to wait for information to make its way round the world by ship and by land. No longer do we have to wait for the shorter post by air. Now we can have instant electronic messaging. It is not necessary to depend on country wide electric grids for the power. We can use solar power, hydro power, wind power or even crank the machine ourselves to generate the electricity.

Servas has decided to make use of this ease of communication. Instead of waiting to make decisions at the General Assembly we are moving into Distant Voting. This will not need to use the postal system but will use the internet. For those for whom the internet remains expensive the system is being made quick and easy to use. Some details are given in this issue of Servas Monthly News on this page, along with pages 2, 9 and 10. Each country will chose an authorised person to vote for the country. There will be a trial vote to check the system out. And then there will be a series of items to vote on. This should make the next General Assembly a bit less rushed as some of the work will have been covered.

The system has had a lot of work put into it. It is now up to us to make it work well and effectively.

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Distant Voting

The following e-mail has been sent to all National Secretaries.

The "**Servas Regulations for Distant Voting**" passed by eGA 2006 held at Latina, Italy require that:

"The General Assembly shall be responsible for appointing an independent person to be responsible for the organization of the Distant Voting process. This position shall be called the Distant Vote Administrator. The Distant Vote Administrator shall be appointed from suitably qualified candidates recommended by the Executive Committee and shall not hold any other position in Servas International".

eGA 2006 also authorised the Executive Committee to appoint a Distant Vote Administrator to be responsible for organizing the Distant Voting process during the transition period until the next General Assembly.

SI EXCO has appointed Burcu Duzguner of Servas Turkey as the Distant Vote Administrator till the next General Assembly. Her e-mail address is: burcu.duzguner@gmail.com.

I am working closely with Burcu in preparation for the First Distant Vote. As you know, I am working on developing and setting up an Internet based distant voting system. Once, the system has been set up, I will hand it over to Burcu for conducting the Distant Votes.

Pramod Kumar, General Secretary, Servas International

See page 2 (News) for detail on the schedule and pages 9 and 10 for a Quick Reference Guide..

Contact

We welcome articles coming to SI Monthly News. We do not guarantee the article, or any part of it will be published. This depends on the theme for the month along with the number of other articles also available for publication.

Preferred method of contact is email at: newsletter@servas.org or jgiffould@aol.com

Please make sure that Servas: Monthly News is part of the subject heading. Otherwise if the email address is not recognised it may get deleted before being read.

Hospitality Organizations

Dear friends of Servas ,

If you have time maybe you could spend a couple of minutes on the issue 'Hospitality Organizations' as more and more their growth and their approach will become very important and will influence Servas.

I participated at this event organised by Be Welcome and I want to send you a short feedback.

There were about 100 participants. The majority of the people were members of Hospitality Club (HC), Couchsurfing (CS) and BeWelcome (BW), most of them are members of 2 ,3, 4 organisations. There were very few Servas members, max 10, the NS of Servas Netherlands came over to participate.

Most of the participants were young people from countries all over the world, some living in Belgium, others coming over from European countries; others were travelling in Belgium or in neighbouring countries and joined the meeting. Typical that only the Servas members were 'older' ones

**Servas is not known by the majority of the people
Reaction of people who heard about Servas before or had been member:**

- too complicated (interview, LOI, host lists etc),
- too slow
- too expensive (no charge in the other organizations)
- organization for older ones, very few young members in the host lists
- in some countries very difficult to be hosted or to meet (very few hosts or no response)

There were some members of HC who didn't feel so happy with it and are really interested to join Servas in our country or in their own country, but the majority do not complain.

I've participated in many Servas meetings in Europe: I can hardly say that the 'atmosphere' of friendship was very different to one in a Servas gathering: people are friendly, open minded and happy to meet again (hosted each other or met on a previous meeting.) Of course people joining the meeting are maybe more involved than other members, but isn't it just the same for Servas?

In my opinion it's a must and very important for Servas to be present in such kind of meetings, we can no longer hide ourselves and ignore the other ones.

Best Servas regards,

Rita Dessauvage, NS Servas Belgium

Hospitality Organizations

Organisations that were present

- BeWelcome www.bewelcome.org
- CouchSurfing www.couchsurfing.org
- GlobalFreeLoaders www.globalfreeloaders.com
- Hospitalityclub www.hospitalityclub.org
- Servas www.servas.org
- Virtual Tourist www.virtualtourist.com

You can see the participants on the site <http://www.4komma6692.de/event/brussel/>

Distant Voting Schedule

I am pleased to announce that during the just concluded EXCO Meet held in Bangalore, India, EXCO has finalised the schedule for Distant Votes to be held till the next General Assembly. The schedule is as follows:

- 1st Distant Vote from 1st August, 2007 to 7th November, 2007**
- 2nd Distant Vote from 15th March, 2008 to 25th June, 2008**
- 3rd Distant Vote from 1st November, 2008 to 10th February, 2009**

The first Distant Vote will be on:

1. The External Auditor's Report on the year 2004 accounts
2. The budget for the year 2008

Voting will be held through Internet (World Wide Web). So, the Authorised Voters of all eligible member countries will be able to vote from anywhere in the world, using a computer with Internet connectivity. Voting will be kept open for several weeks. So, an Authorised Voter will be able to vote on any day convenient to him/her during this period. Of course, there will be adequate security measures to ensure that no member country can vote more than once. In the coming weeks, I shall provide you with more information about the Distant Voting process.

I feel honoured that EXCO has entrusted me with the responsibility of developing and implementing the first ever Distant Voting system for Servas International. I shall look forward to your co-operation in making this mission successful.

Pramod Kumar, General Secretary, Servas International

Meetings, Get together, Seeing each other

Get together in London

The venue is **Pontefract Castle.**

This is in Wigmore Street, London W1.

The nearest Underground Station is
Bond Street.

Date: First Monday in every month.

Time: 6.30 onwards.

Look forward to seeing you all there.

United States Servas. Inc. Tri-National Conference Canada – Mexico – United States “Peace in Everyday Life”

July 20 – 22, 2007

California State University, San Diego
San Diego, California U.S.A.

On-line registration and reserving rooms will begin
in May, 2007.

SERVAS MEGA PICNIC

Region of Ecaussines, Belgium

Sep 23, 2007

Servas Mega PicNic and Walk

The second edition of the Mega PicNic will take place in the French speaking part of Belgium, in the Province of Hainaut, South of Brussels. More details will follow, but you can already block Sunday 23th of September in your agenda in order to join us.

This event will be organized by the Peace Group of Servas Belgium & Luxemburg

Theme: We want to know each other better!

For more information please contact [Julie Pesesse](#), Peace Secretary
Rita Dessauvage, NS, belgium@servas.be

EUROPE

A good reason for all Servas travellers to visit...

Luxembourg and the Greater Region: European Capital of Culture 2007

Get ready for plenty of enriching experiences, discover new horizons and find out more about the Servas hosts in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg and the Greater Region (parts of Belgium, France and Germany) Rita Dessauvage NS Belg & Lux
belgium@servas.org luxemburg@servas.org
Visit <http://www.luxembourg2007.org>
<http://www.sibiu2007.ro>

4th Annual Youth Assembly at the U.N. August 12-15, 2007

Post Assembly Leadership Training Seminar August 16-20, 2007

- Get involved with U.N. issues & Global NGOs
- Make a difference in YOUR lifetime and ... Prepare for a Great Experience in New York City
- Networking and Career Opportunities
- Great Speakers, Engaging Workshops
- All events at the United Nations are FREE
- Special Post-Assembly Leadership Training Seminar: Transforming Information Into Action

BE THE CHANGE!

~ Website Launch and Applications Accepted from February 10, 2007, at the web address below

Special Youth Achievement Awards: Your school, community, religious or civic organization can nominate you for SPECIAL RECOGNITION for Humanitarian deeds in 2006-07

Special for 2007: Join the U. C. Peace Festival! Performance Groups interested in Cultural Diplomacy and Peace through the Arts are invited to join us for a day, or two, the entire week, or more!

Email us for accommodation costs; Groups welcome: Perform or attend with your mates!

email: yaapplications@faf.org

web: http://www.faf.org/hl_youthassembly.htm

Youth and Family Week, 2007

Dalesbridge, Yorkshire, UK

Sun 29 July - Sat 04 Aug

See previous issues for detail

Contact: dasher1949@aol.com

Last calls so that we can finalise details.

Look forward to seeing you all there.

Languages - Peace

Servas Monthly News has now been going for 2 years. During that time we have looked at some of the languages in the world. We have thought about the word for Peace.

Here is the word Peace written in a number of languages. At the bottom of the page are the languages they come from. Can you work out which is which? Hint I have used all the ones given in Servas Monthly News and some more. For some languages the word is the same, so there are more countries than words.

For all the languages I have used the European script. So apologies to those countries who have their own script or characters.

Send the answers to newsletter@servas.org
No prizes but a commendation in Servas Monthly News for those who send the answers in.

Fred

Friede

Hop'ingte

Kagiso

Khaghaghutyun

La Paix

Mier

Mir

Pace

Peace

Paz

Pokoj

Rauha

Salaam

Salama

Selam

Shalom

Shanti

Solh

Taim bilong sikan

Tinchlik

Uku-tula

Countries: Arab countries, Armenian, Austria (German), Botswana, China (Mandarin), Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Ethiopia (Amharic), Finland, France, India (Hindi), Iran, Israel, Italy, Kenya (Kiswahili), Norway (Bokmål), Papua New Guinea (Pidgin) Poland, Russia, Sierra Leone (Kril), Slovakia, South Africa (Zulu) Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Uzbekistan

Host and Travel Reports

Servas Belgium meets Servas Mexico April 2007

Some years ago I retired as a teacher and started a new career as a 'student', Spanish was the language I wanted to learn! Our teacher of Spanish felt in love with Mexico and left Belgium to live in her favourite country. After living two years in Chiapas she wanted to show her students her 'new' country in another way than tour operators are doing it. It was a great opportunity for us to discover Mexico this way, above all Chiapas, a region far away from Mexico City, close to the border of Guatemala and often forgotten by the Central government, I think!

Our program was very charged, we wanted to take advantage of every moment, visited cities, archaeological Maya sites, 'la selva Lacandona', 'los pueblos indios' and so much more; names as Oaxaca, Monte Albán, San Cristóbal de las Casas, San Juan Chamula, Yaxchilán, Bonampak, Palenque are in our mind for ever.

We had one free day, the last one, in Mexico DF and this day became a real Servas day. Travelling without meeting Servas members, I'm not used to... Isabel & William who visited us last year wanted to bring us to the pyramids of

Teotihuacan. Unfortunately they were ill and couldn't join us in DF, but no problem, Valentina, Isabel's sister, her husband, her son, and her nephew took us to Teotihuacan, one of the world's most impressive archaeological sites.

In the evening we had a dinner with a group of Servas friends in the restaurant of Sanborns, a visit at 'La casa de los Azulejos' is a must when you are in DF. Thank you Hector and Fabian for organizing this meeting and for giving us the opportunity to meet you and Mario, Laura, Susana, Annie, Darleana, Rodolfo... We really enjoyed the company of all these members of Servas Mexico.

And... we will never forget the night after the meeting... Mexico City "moved"... "We first didn't realize what was happening!"... We didn't drink too much tequila...!!! An earthquake...6.3 on the scale of Richter... we stayed for the night in a park close to our hotel...waiting till four o'clock in the morning...time to go to the airport and to fly back to Belgium. The next day...we were on the front page of the newspaper....

Our trip to Mexico couldn't be more complete!



Gracias Servas México! Bienvenido a Bélgica!
Rita Dessauvage, National Secretary Belgium & Luxemburg

Change of address Scotland to Switzerland

Birgit Schuback who was host 07/480 in Edinburgh, Scotland has now moved back to Switzerland where she is host 144 in Lausanne. As she is in the 2007 list for Britain she would like everyone to know about her move and visit her in Switzerland instead.

Another Servas Blogger

This seems to be the link:

http://www.thevirtualwire.com/2007/05/walking_towards.html

Your readers interested in blogs like these can subscribe to the new blog search engine on the new Servas.org website [qv].

Link sent by Gary Sealey, Canada

Country Reports

Samarkandiana - exhibition on display

Dear Friends,

On 17 May - to honour the International Museum Day - at the Samarkand State Museum of Cultural History of Uzbekistan we inaugurated a new international exhibition "The World Congratulates Samarkand", dedicated to the 2750-years jubilee of Samarkand. We received a lot of entries (salutations, poems, songs, pictures, artwork, books etc) sent in by people from around the world. The ceremony was attended by our guests from Switzerland and France and was filmed by the television.

Check out a Russian-language story about the event on the national Internet-portal UzReport.Com: <http://culture.uzreport.com/news.cgi?lan=r&id=32136>
<http://culture.uzreport.com/news.cgi?lan=r&id=32136&print=y>

In August we are planning to add a new exhibition section "Samarkand on Every Continent".

Samarkandiana-project is a permanent program of our Peace Museum:

<http://www.museum.com/jb/museum?id=26810&show=10&event=4103>

Thanks again for your cooperation and support.

See you one day here in 2750-year-old Samarkand.

With very best wishes,

*Anatoly Ionesov,
Director International Museum of Peace and Solidarity*

Sentierinsieme-pathways together 2006 The green Black Forest

Black Forest in German is "Schwarzwald". Between July and August the "walking Servas people" made their appointment there.

The first time in Germany, the twenty-second time of "Sentierinsieme / Pathways Together": up and down, on Europe's paths! Always with the same enthusiasm!

It was a beautiful experience in a very green natural area, with various adventures (a descent by "tobogan" too), good stay in comfortable little hotels, piping hot "suppe", generous tankards of "blonde" beer, and - above all- wonderful company.

Nice people, old and new friends to discover in few days of life all together.

Thank you to Gudrun Baumgartner and Margret Klaeser, the organizers and our "guides" and "locomotives", and thank you to all the participants.

"Good-bye", hoping to see you in Switzerland next year in July.

Luigi Uslenghi, Italy

Meetings in San Francisco

MARCH GATHERING

A good crowd of 42 people met at St. Gregory's for a tasty pot luck dinner on Sat, March 23. Our guest speaker was Ann Frisch, a Servas host and traveler who talked to us about her volunteer service for the Nonviolent Peace Force, which operates as a neutral go-between in conflict areas around the world.

TIMING OF OUR GATHERINGS

We try to get together every month and we usually alternate between St. Gregory's and Jeremy Sommer's headquarters, Zocalo. St. Gregory's is a busy church, with many meetings and public events as well as church services and choir practice, so space is not always available. Jeremy spends a lot of his time traveling and has a busy schedule when in town. So we have to skip some months.



Sentierinsieme-pathways together 2006



Watching how to make a Black Forest gateau.

Harvesting blackberries on the trail

Servas at the UN, Comments

SERVAS INTERNATIONAL AT UNITED NATIONS GENEVA, 2006 COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS BECOMES COUNCIL ON HUMAN RIGHTS

On 27 March 2006, the last meeting of the Commission on Human Rights (the Commission) has taken place. It has adopted a resolution to remit all reports to the Council on Human Rights (the Council) to be examined at its first session. The creation of this Council is based on Assembly General Resolution 60/251 of 15.03.2005. Whereas the Commission had 53 members, the Council has 47 members.

During the first session the Council, meeting from 19 to 30 June 2006, discussed the reports of the different Working Groups. In his opening statement to the Council, Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, said the Council's work should mark a break from the past. The Council should never be allowed to become caught up in political point scoring or petty manoeuvres; it should always think of those whose rights were denied. In presenting her annual report, High Commissioner on Human Rights, Louise Arbour said poverty continued to be the most serious, invidious and widespread human rights violation to be confronted.

In August the final session of the Sub-Commission has taken place, following the adoption of resolution 2006/102 by the new Council.

The second session of the Council, which started on 18 September was suspended on 6 October until 27 November to take action on all the draft proposals that it could not consider given their high number and the insufficient time available in order to guarantee the due and balanced consideration of all proposals. The Council terminated the work of the second session on November 27 and 28.

The third session of the Council took place from 29 November to 8 December. This was largely devoted to organization of future work. Other items on the agenda: the Durban Review Conference; the Elaboration of Complementary Standards in the Fight against Racism; the Arab-Israeli conflict; the Prevention of Genocide; the Commission of Inquiry on Lebanon; missions to the Occupied Palestinian Territories; the Declaration on the Rights of indigenous Peoples; the review of mechanisms.

The Council's fourth special session, on 12 December 2006, considered the situation in Darfur/Sudan.

The fourth regular session of the Council will be held from 12 March to 5 April 2007.

The above forms part of my activity report.

Hilda Burer
Representative of SERVAS INTERNATIONAL
to the United Nations in Geneva

TOPICS NEEDED, PLEASE

I joined the NGO Working Group on Human Rights Education and Learning (NGO WG on HREL) which is studying - also together with Mr. Vernor Munoz, the UNO Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, together also with a representative of UNESCO - the best possible ways and methods to mainstreaming Human Rights Education & Learning into the Special Procedures Mechanism. This WG meets once a month.

The representation to UNO in Geneva would be grateful if SIECO members could be helpful in providing topics and texts of statements to be submitted on items on the Agenda of the session of the Human Rights Council. The next session, the fifth, will take place from 18 to 29 June 2007.

Hilda Burer, Geneva, 14.05.2007

Servas Britain - * in the host list

Various travellers have commented on the * which appears in the British Host list.. There appears to be some confusion as to the meaning of it. At the front of the host list it says:

** host wishes to meet more British travellers.*

This means what it says. However it does not mean the host only wants to meet British travellers. It encourages British travellers and hosts to visit each other.

It goes back many years when there was discussion, in Britain, as to whether one should visit hosts in one's own country. Some people said yes and others said no. A number of us were keen to encourage people to visit people in their own country and so a * was put by those who especially wanted visitors from their own country as well as overseas. The * is less relevant now but has stayed in the book rather than being removed.

Stationery Design on offer

I am working on some stationery design for Servas Australia and am happy to share this. I am a graphic designer, a Servas host, and doing it for free. I am happy to share this and tap into the international Servas community for feedback.

I aim to update the materials (and ideally the logo) to something more contemporary, with strong appeal to the next generation.

At the same time, as an older host myself, I want things that are clear and easy to read...

Russell Shiells, Australia

Exco Info

Servas helpful services still needed.

Servas host lists are full of the caring professions: nurses, teachers, other care-givers. Many Servas hosts and travelers each day work at changing the world: policy analysts, architects, planners, designers. Many of us also are active members of other organizations supporting literacy, health, environmental quality, organic farming. I have not tried to count the many ways in which we serve our community, but I know they are numerous.

Within the countries of Servas member groups there are still many un-served needs. In my recent travels to India I met a village school teacher appealing for books; I saw slums in Bangkok and in Manila, two of the world's great cities – where children and parents and communities need help in learning literacy. I attended a foreign workers workshop in Philippines which discussed the plight of seven million Philippines domestic servants in developed countries around the world, e.g. France, USA, Japan -- and among the upper classes elsewhere: e.g. Korea, Taiwan. They are often alone, afraid, abused and unconnected with their adopted communities. Servas outreach could connect and welcome them. Several professional teachers, members of Servas Turkey in Istanbul told me that they are looking for ways to help poor schools with teacher outreach and with library books and texts.

Are you interested in using Servas to serve others? Would you like to take a working "holiday" to a Servas country or in your own community, and really make a difference? Would you be interested in joining a study group on matching needs with volunteers and possibly in helping write an action plan? Please let us know or write to Jane at SI News. newsletter@servas.org

Gary Sealey, SI President

Servas International EXCO

The Executive Committee met for the first time to sort out its action plans in Bangalore, to see how to overcome some issues effectively and joyfully.

We:

- o reviewed the Big Picture of Servas (you are welcome to a copy of our analysis).
- o prepared for the first-ever Distant Vote,
- o reviewed the Audit to see how to improve Servas.
- o decided to help encourage more fun into Servas through encouraging group activities, volunteers and by reducing un-needed paper and procedural burden in Servas.

Among the issues: Servas International revenues are declining partly in Eastern Europe, USA, and remaining flat in large under-developed areas. Happily, some parts of Servas are growing quickly. The largest number of hosts can now be found in Servas Italy.

Among the opportunities:

Servas 's sixtieth birthday will be upon us, in 2009. That upcoming occasion recalls a time of great hope, following the second World War and before the Cold War. Hope can be so powerful and helpful. Maybe you have ideas and interests in helping us have a big, global celebration, which might connect us to our roots, encourage partnerships with other justice-seeking organizations result in improved outreach give boost better direction to Servas programmes?

We need a birthday celebration team globally, locally and for each member group and area of Servas. Please put your name forward! Contact your national secretary and please let us know so that we can help join you to others!

Gary Sealey, SI President

EXCO Update Monday, May 14, 2007
EXCO met in Bangalore, Apr 30 - May 7. It was our first face-to-face meeting, we tried to make up for delays.

Although we set meeting times, we often stayed later, two or even four hours, to:

- Set the timing and draft wording of the first ever Distant Vote, which will help Servas member groups make joint decisions between General Assemblies.
- Receive the Auditor on 2004 Accounts, and received his advice which will be used in completing review of 2005/2006 Accounts
- Research and itemize improved accounting details for expanded Financial Operating Procedures, to accelerate accurate, transparent quarterly accounting
- Clear outstanding officer advances and claims
- Develop forward Servas International budgets for vote by Servas member groups
- Evaluate the Big Picture of Servas including critical strengths and trends and some weaknesses in Servas groups and Servas International

- Look for/ found ways of putting more fun into Servas, including world wide celebration of Servas values with member groups and citizens on 60th anniversary
- Prepare guidance for review and renewal of Servas Areas and Area Elections

- Presented the 'Servas story' to Indian national television and other media, and in meetings with Servas India and many NGO groups operating in India

Before our meeting, we sent requests for advice to national secretaries and committees. Thanks to all who replied!

While I am writing this note, there is a protest down the street, in this Kerala city of Triverandum. The protest is about globalization of finances which the protesters say will rapidly destroy a way of life. It makes me think there should be a human accounting to balance financial accounting. Perhaps Quality of life accounting would help make good choices.

Gary Sealey, SI President

Servas International

Distant Voting 2007 - Quick Reference Guide

This is a brief outline of the Distant Voting process that was added to the Servas International Statutes at the General Assembly held at Latina in April 2006.

The Distant Voting process means the member groups of Servas International (SI) can make decisions affecting Servas International between meetings of the General Assembly. The Distant Voting process enables every member group to participate in this decision making process without being disadvantaged by geographical location or lack of funds.

Preparation for the first Distant Voting, to be held in 2007, is underway.

The first step was the General Secretary's mail-out to National Secretaries in December asking member groups to advise:

- the name and contact details of their "Authorised Voter"
- the preferred methods of communication for the Distant Voting process
- language preferences for written material.

What is Distant Voting used for?

A Distant Vote is required each year between each General Assembly to vote on the annual accounts, auditor's report and any changes to the SI budget.

The Distant Voting process may also be used to vote on:

- matters to be decided before the next General Assembly meeting
- motions arising from decisions of the General Assembly
- a motion to suspend or remove from office any SI officer
- the election of SI officers to fill vacancies (by secret vote).

The Distant Voting process cannot be used to amend the SI Statutes.

Which National Groups can vote?

All National Groups (Servas countries) having 10 or more hosts (including day hosts) that have been accepted as Member Groups of Servas International by a General Assembly and that fulfil their membership obligations as defined in the SI Statutes (as amended) can vote.

Note: An updated list of Member Groups which have fulfilled their obligations and have voting rights will be brought out by the General Secretary before each Distant Vote.

Who votes for the Member Group?

Each Member Group (voting country) appoints an "Authorised Voter" to receive and cast the vote on behalf of that country. The Authorised Voter is the primary contact for the Distant Voting process and will also receive information on the issues to be voted on.

Note: Who will be their "Authorised Voter" is decided locally by each Member Group. A National Secretary can also be the Authorised Voter for his/her Member Group.

How does a country vote under the Distant Voting system?

Distant Voting system permits several ways of voting, for example, by ordinary mail, express courier service, fax, E-mail or through an Internet Web site. After considering various options, it has been decided to adopt a Web site based voting system. The voting process will ensure that only Authorised Voters can vote on behalf of their Member Groups and that they can only vote once on each issue.

Note: The detailed steps of the voting process will be advised to Authorised Voters and Member Groups.

What information will we get?

The text of each of the motions to be voted on, background information on the motions, details of the voting procedure and the date by which votes must be cast.

Note: Only the Authorised Voters will receive the passwords, which will enable them to vote on behalf of their Member Groups.

Who decides how our country's vote is used?

It is the responsibility of each Member Group, in accordance with their local statutes or practices, to determine the decision making process for deciding what they want their country's vote to be on each issue. This will include deciding who will be the Authorised Voter and may include directing them how the vote is to be entered on each issue.

Note: The Authorised Voters are the primary contact points for the Distant Voting process. This means they are technically responsible for sending back the vote on behalf of their Member Group. This may or may not include deciding how the vote is used.

When do we vote?

The timetable for the Distant Vote will set down the closing date for the vote as well as the date when the resolutions to be voted on and the voting procedures will be sent to Member Groups.

Note: The closing date for the Distant Vote must be at least three months after the motions to be voted on and the voting information are sent to Member Groups.

What are the voting options?

For each motion (the resolution to be voted on), there will be three options for each vote:

- Support/yes
- Against/no
- Abstain.

What happens to my vote?

The votes will be received, by mail or electronically, by the Distant Vote Administrator who will also count the votes after it has been confirmed that they are from Authorised Voters.

When are the results available?

The results are to be sent to Member Groups within two months of the closing date for the vote. The results are available on request to all Servas hosts and travellers.

How many votes are needed to pass a motion?

Generally, Distant Vote motions are passed when a majority of the votes cast are “support/yes”, that is by a simple majority.

However, motions that have been passed by a double majority are adopted **as if they had been passed by a meeting of the General Assembly**. A motion is passed by a double majority when:

a/ the majority of votes cast are “support/yes”

b/ AND when the “support/yes” vote is at least four tenths of the number of Member Groups allowed to vote in the Distant Vote.

This means that Distant Voting can be used to make decisions that in the past had to wait for the next General Assembly – but only when there is wide support for the motion.

Note: Motions only passed by a simple majority provide Executive Committee and other groups with an indication of the thinking of Member Groups, that may guide further work on the proposal leading to a decision at another Distant Vote or at the next General Assembly.

What does Servas do with the results of the Distant Vote?

Normally, motions passed by a Distant Vote will act as instructions to the Executive Committee from the Member Groups of Servas. Votes passed by a double majority are the same as a motion passed by a vote at a General Assembly. This will allow the Executive Committee to develop policies and projects with the support of Member Groups between General Assembly meetings.

Who is responsible for the Distant Voting process?

The **President** is responsible for ensuring the Distant Voting process is conducted in accordance with the *Servas International Statutes* and the *Servas Regulations for Distant Voting* – these documents are available from the Servas website.

The **Distant Vote Administrator** is responsible for the organisation of the Distant Voting process, including setting the timetable, distribution of the voting information, the voting process and reporting the results. The Distant Vote Administrator was appointed by Executive Committee and holds no other position in Servas International.

The **General Secretary** is responsible for advising Member Groups of the timetable, recording the Authorised Voters and sending the results of the Distant Vote as reported by the Distant Vote Administrator, to Member Groups.

Member Groups are responsible for appointing their Authorised Voter and advising the General Secretary through their National Secretaries. They are also responsible for determining the decision making process for deciding how their vote will be used on each

How can we check our vote was counted?

Look at the Distant Vote Administrator’s report to the Executive Committee, due within two months of the closing date for the vote. This report includes the voting result for each motion, the number of Member Groups allowed to vote, a detailed list of how each Member Group voted on non-secret motions as well as the number of votes received but not counted with the reason they were disallowed.

Is there an appeal or recount process?

Yes, an independent recount and audit of the results of the Distant Vote may be called for by written request to the President. This must be done within three months of the results being sent to Member Groups. [Section 9/ of the Servas Regulations for Distant Voting.]

The Global Peace Index

This article was found on BBC News on the internet on 31 May 2007. It could be of interest to Servas members in that it is comparing Peace issues in different countries and then rating the countries. League table, I suppose so, but it is at least on a relevant topic to us.

Below is the link and some extracts from the article.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/6704767.stm>

"The Global Peace Index, compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit, looked at 24 factors to determine how peaceful each country was."

"The brainchild of Steve Killelea, an Australian entrepreneur, the survey is meant to inform governments, international organisations, and campaign groups.

Mr Killelea said: "This is a wake-up call for leaders around the globe. Countries need to become more peaceful to solve the major challenges that the world faces - from climate change to decreasing biodiversity.

"There is also a strong case for the world becoming more peaceful and it is now crucial for world leaders and business to take a lead," he said.

The study is published just before the G8 summit of leading countries next week.

The authors say they are trying to supplant what they call some "woolly" definitions of peace with a scientific approach, that includes levels of violent crime, political instability, and a country's relations with its neighbours.

But questions have been raised over the way some of these factors are brought together.

The authors themselves acknowledge that there is a lack of data in many countries.

Peace Pedalers Africa Newsletter: Zambia

The author of this, Jamie, is doing a tour of Africa on a tandem bicycle with a trailer. Her ride through Zambia taught her the necessity of tolerance.

To get on her mailing list use this email address:
newsletters@peacepedalers.com

....and some links from Peace Direct

IF YOU'VE ONLY FIFTEEN MINUTES TO SPARE...

Haunting, taunting, singing, sit-ins, stand-ins, praying and disrobing. Gene Sharp's [198 Methods of Nonviolent Protest and Persuasion](#).

"An egg is used as a physical reminder of the fragility of peace." [A Kenyan Superhero](#). An inspiring three minute film on the work of peacebuilder Dekha Ibrahim Abdi.

"Having seen one another only through weapon sights, we've put down our guns to fight for peace."

Israeli and Palestinian ex-combatants come together:
[Combatants for Peace](#)

"The military are growing increasingly concerned with operational security."

[Milbloggers](#): the rise of the military blogs as well as the politics that govern them.

AND IF YOU'VE A LITTLE LONGER...



[This Was Not Our War](#). Amazing first-person accounts of 26 Bosnian women reconstructing their society following years of devastating warfare.

Click for [another chance](#) to hear Fergal Keane tell the story of Henri Bura Ladyi and how people like him all over the world - local people - are building peace in the middle of conflict. They are risking their lives every day and they deserve our support.

INSIGHT ON CONFLICT

NEPAL: SWAPPING CONFLICT FOR CONCRETE

Over to Lucy and the team at [Insight on Conflict](#) for this month's featured peacebuilding initiative:

A Report of the 4th Far East Asia Conference

On April 6 to 8 we held our 4th regional conference at the Arirang Hotel in Pusan, Korea. It was attended by FEA members: Japan (11), China (1), Hong Kong (1), Taiwan (2), and Korea (over 150). We also had special guests like Ms Mary Jane Mikuriya, Vice President, SI, Dr. Ramesh Sharma, NS, India and Mr Muhammad Naseen, NS, Pakistan.

Day 1, Friday, April 6, 2007

At 6.00 p.m. on Friday 6 a special session was held in which Ms Mary Jane Mikuriya, VP, made a presentation about the importance of interviewing and LOI. She said an interviewer is a gate keeper for Servas. The interviewer decides if an interviewee can be suitable as a traveler, so the role of an interviewer is very important. Sometimes a traveler visits hosts in other countries without an LOI, which is out of the question. You should listen carefully to a potential traveler before issuing an LOI to him/her. To help determine if the applicant is a serious learner and is seeking a cultural exchange, there are five 'must' questions for an interviewer. They are:

- 1) What trips have you done what did you learn from them?
- 2) What are you interested in?
- 3) Have you had any Servas experiences before?
- 4) What peace activity have you been involved in before?
- 5) What is your purpose of your trip this time?

After the session some of the participants asked her questions, to which she replied by quoting real examples.

After the special session was over, VP called for a meeting joined by NS's, FEA countries as well as AC. She told us what is required to develop and strengthen Servas. She introduced the resolutions approved by the EGA in 2006. Then we had a discussion of several topics on the Far East Asian region.

- 1) Which countries are in the region?
- 2) How is Servas functioning in each country?
- 3) What needs to be done to activate and strengthen Servas in the Region?
- 4) How can we help each other?
- 5) Who should lead?
- 6) Where will the next FEA Regional Conference be? When?
- 7) What are the regional goals for FEA?
- 8) What evidence will show that the goals were achieved?

We agreed that six countries should be included in our region: Korea, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mongolia, though Mongolia has no member registered now. In each country Servas is functioning in its own way, and it is worth special mentioning that Taiwan has seen a remarkable increase in the number from 15 or 16 to nearly 60. Serena Tang, NS, said most new members are young. It is wonderful that in this regional conference more than 15 members of Servas Korea attended together with their family members.

We can help each other by making use of the SKYPE and Websites written in English. Regarding the AC, we agreed that Masahiro Nishiyama, the present AC, should lead our region with Mr. Kim Jong Soo, NS, Korea, as deputy AC.

We agreed the next regional conference be held in Hong Kong next summer. NS's of China and Taiwan said that they will work with Servas Hong Kong to make it successful. The regional goals for FEA is, to recruit more new members, especially in China, and exchange more not only with each other in our region but also with other Asian countries.

Day 2 Saturday, April 7, 2007

The program started at 2 o'clock with the welcome greetings of Mr. Kim Jong Soo, NS of Servas Korea. Masahiro Nishiyama, AC, FEA, introduced the participants and guests from countries other than Korea. We should add a piece of good news. Ms Tserendulam Badamsuren, a Mongolian student, studying at a university in Korea, joined us. She is a lucky star to us. To our great joy, there were nearly 200 people present. Several members brought all their family!

Then each NS of FEA made an action report. Servas Korea has 11 branches and they hold a regional meeting regularly. EXCO Servas Korea has 4 or 5 meetings every year. It is noticeable they have planned to send several members to the Youth Camp in England this summer and will carry out a 6-month expedition from Seoul to London in 2010: Servas Eurasia Expedition 2010. The most significant decision by Servas Korea is they are thinking of hosting the SI conference in 2009! Servas China has been repeating winning and losing new members for the past several years. Dr. Chanxian Yi, NS, complains the registration has not been stable. Right now there are 15 day hosts in China, but they held a national meeting last year, attended by 5 members. Servas Hong Kong has had a steady number of members for the past several years. They have about 20 members. In March this year they had a general meeting in the city center and agreed on several points. First they will make every effort to increase the number to 40 from 22. They will invite non-members to their meetings, which may trigger increasing the membership. They decided they will begin exchange with China. Servas Taiwan had a lot of new members last year. Now they have about 60 members, though half of them are day hosts. In February they had a welcome meeting for new members, and completed to set up Servas Taiwan Blog. Servas Japan has seen a decrease in the number of members over the past several years, but seems to have touched the bottom recently. The present enrollment is 318. Last year about 60 Japanese members went abroad and nearly 200 travelers were accepted. In March they had a national meeting and discussed such matters as how to recruit more members and to make more accesses to their own homepage. They agreed that they should pay more attention to the activities of Peace Secretary.

After the presentation by each NS, Mary Jane Mikuriya, VP, SI, talked about her own experiences as a traveler and VP. One day she met two senior persons in Germany who survived the holocaust. She listened to their experiences. They, unknown to each other, decided that it was time to make peace with their past. Both visited young Servas families in Germany and had wonderful welcoming experiences. When they returned home they were surprised to discover that they were at peace within themselves and with Germany. It was a really precious lesson in peace: it supported the basic philosophy of Servas. Another person, a computer engineer, was using her trip as a Servas traveler to change her profession and sought out Servas members interested in professions that support environment and women's rights. As a result she changed her career.

At 6 o'clock there was a ceremonial event: MOU Exchange between the Director of Pusan Convention and Visitor Bureau and NS, Servas Korea. It was watched with awe by all the participants. After the ceremony we sat at our dinner table to be served with delicious Korean dishes. We ate it with gusto! Our dinner was garnished by a troop of traditional musicians, whose performance was excellent like the dinner.

Day 3 Sunday, April 8, 2007

After breakfast the participants were divided into three groups and had a discussion on various topics like "Servas Activities," "Exchange among FEA region," and "Exchange with SEA countries." To our regret, there was not enough time, because it was sandwiched by breakfast and departure for Kyongju.

The 2007 FEA conference was prepared by the EXCO team of Servas Korea and was helped by a lot of Korean members. We would like to give our hearty gratitude to Mr. Kim Jong Soo, NS, Mr. Eum Jay Ryang, the ex-NS, and all the Korean staff for their devotion to the 4th FEA conference.

Masahiro Nishiyama AC, FEA