

Mr Li Minghua

Chair, MOWCAP

The following matters have been on my mind for some time and I wish to submit them for discussion at the forthcoming Bureau meeting, perhaps under “any other business” in the agenda.

Since all the RSC members will be present in Tokyo, may I also suggest that it would be useful for them to have a separate break-out session to consider the first group of comments below.

Ray Edmondson

2 July 2017

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REGISTER SUBCOMMITTEE

We have fortunately reached a situation where the MOWCAP Register Subcommittee (RSC) is able to meet in its own right on a date and at a place which conveniently suits its timetable.

The RSC’s Rules of Procedure provide for the appointment of members for 4 year terms, although I do not think this provision has ever been properly implemented. I think it should be now, especially as it is clear there is a need for additional members to bring the RSC up to an adequate strength.

Comparing the Rules with those that apply to the MoW International Advisory Committee’s (IAC) RSC, and reflecting on the experience of past cycles of the MoW Asia Pacific Register, I suggest we consider the following points:

1 For the first time, we are now in a practical position where the RSC’s report to the General Meeting can be finalised in advance of that meeting, and I suggest that this requirement be added to the Rules. It is also axiomatic that once the RSC has decided and recorded a recommendation in its report, all RSC members are bound to support that position at the General Meeting.

2 The IAC RSC Rules provide for the participation of a representative of the Director General of UNESCO to participate in the work of the committee *without the right to vote*.¹ In practice, this person is the head of the MoW Secretariat in Paris. The Secretariat handles all

¹ The formality is that “the Director General or his/her representative shall participate in the work of the IAC, the Bureau and other subsidiary bodies, but without the right to vote. He or she may submit oral or written statements on any matter in the course of this participation”. *General Guidelines 5.4*

the support functions relating to the register (receiving and receipting nominations, correspondence with nominators, collation of papers for RSC meetings, etc.) Translated to our region, an equivalent provision could be for the UNESCO Regional Advisor, or a person appointed by her/him, or alternatively the Secretary General, to participate in the work of the MOWCAP RSC.

3 As a practical measure for sharing the workload, we could consider the appointment of *both* a Chair and Deputy Chair of the MOWCAP RSC.

4 The IAC RSC is composed of 9 members, three of whom are chosen in consultation with CCAAA, IFLA and ICA. This ensures that the expertise and perspective of the archiving, librarianship and audiovisual archiving professions are available in the deliberations of the committee. While I don't think this provision finds a neat correspondence with the structures of the Asia Pacific region, I suggest the essential logic of having these three areas of expertise present in the MOWCAP RSC should be followed.

5 This is overlaid by the need to seek, as far as possible, a spread of geographic representation across Asia Pacific. For example, we might consider the way UNESCO distributes itself across the region with five clusters.²

6 In neither the IAC RSC Rules or the MOWCAP RSC Rules it is specified who appoints the Chair but not the *members* of the committee. For the IAC RSC this is done, in practice, by its Chair in consultation with the head of the MoW Secretariat. I suggest a practical process for MOWCAP RSC would be nominations by the RSC Chair and appointment by the Bureau.

7 Should the Bureau appoint one of its number to be an ex officio member of the RSC?

2018 BUREAU ELECTIONS

MOWCAP has grown to the point where I think a more formal and considered approach to Bureau elections is needed.

To date, the practice has been to call for nominations from the floor, and where necessary to conduct a secret ballot if there are multiple candidates for a position.

I suggest we should adopt the standard practice of many professional organisations and issue a call for nominations well in advance of the General Meeting. Candidates for Bureau positions would provide a statement supporting their candidature and this would be distributed to all members in advance of the meeting. There would be no nominations from the floor during the meeting. The Statutes do not prescribe an election procedure, and it has always been the responsibility of the Bureau to determine the procedure. Traditionally

² East Asia (Beijing Office Cluster), South Asia (New Delhi Office Cluster), Central Asia (Almaty and Tehran), Southeast Asia (Bangkok and Jakarta), Pacific (Apia)

the election process has been presided by the UNESCO Regional Advisor, or a Special Advisor who is not a candidate for election.

The provisions of the Statutes relating to voting would still apply, although this approach would allow the opportunity for MOWCAP member committees who cannot attend the meeting to lodge a vote in the election in absentia – subject to the Bureau being able to establish from its records the validity of the vote.

The Statutes do not specify who is *eligible* to stand for election. So far it has not been necessary to do so, because all candidates have been present at the General Meeting as representatives of their respective national MoW committees. If this convention is followed in calling for advance nominations, in practice each nomination would have to come from, or be endorsed by, the relevant national MoW committee. (Should there be a filtering or assessment process? See comments below.)

As a reference point, it is useful to consider the rules for the election of members of UNESCO's Executive Board. Translated to MOWCAP's context, it would require candidates for election to give at least six weeks' notice of their candidacy, and for the list of candidates and their statements to be circulated to MOWCAP members at least four weeks before the General Meeting.

COMPOSITION OF THE BUREAU, SPECIAL ADVISORS AND ADDITIONAL POSITIONS

The MOWCAP Statutes, article 9 (1), provide for the election of a Bureau comprising a Chairperson, Vice Chairpersons (number not specified, but as need requires), a Secretary General and the assigned UNESCO Regional Advisor (ex officio). These constitute the members of the Bureau.

The same statute also provides for the establishment of additional positions and the appointment of Special Advisors. It is not clear whether these appointees are formally members of the Bureau, though in practice that is how they have functioned historically. There are four long standing Special Advisors: Simon Chu, Sarah Choy, Richard Engelhardt and Ray Edmondson. In addition, recently the position of Assistant Secretary General was created and Andrew Henderson was appointed to fill it.

I think it is time to clarify this situation and, if necessary, propose an amendment to the Statutes at the 2018 General Meeting.

There is always the potential that the appointed *Special Advisors* could outnumber the elected members of the Bureau and I think this would be an anomalous situation. I would propose that:

- (a) Special Advisors are not deemed to be members of the Bureau and do not have a vote in the Bureau

- (b) When appointed by the Bureau following its election, each Special Advisor is assigned a role or area of expertise on which he or she is expected to offer advice, and the duration of the appointment is specified. This is documented in the Bureau's minutes.
- (c) Special Advisors attend Bureau meetings on the invitation of the Chair and for a specified purpose: they do not attend automatically. Advice can always be sought and offered without the Advisor having to be physically present at the meeting.

The role of the *Secretary General* is crucial to the effective operation of MOWCAP and its meetings, and the holder of this position needs a good understanding of MOWCAP statutes and rules and their historical operation. Should candidates for this role be required to have prior MOWCAP experience or engagement, and if so, how should this be expressed in the Statutes and Rules? By the same token, the role of *Chairperson* raises similar issues. Should candidates (for example) be required to have previously served a full term on the Bureau? These two roles, especially, have workloads that require a significant commitment of time. Should candidates be required to evidence such a commitment?

The Bureau's power to establish *additional positions* could be exercised in another direction by providing for a standing pool of volunteers who could offer knowledge, experience and time in various capacities. This may also be a way of maintaining productive links with former Bureau and National MoW Committee members. It would be simple to establish.