

Minutes of the 36th AITA/IATA asbl General Assembly, 1 August 2020 by Zoom

1. Official Opening and welcome to the 36th General Assembly – AITA/IATA

President Béatrice Cellario declared the 36th AITA/IATA General Assembly (GA) open. She welcomed delegates to the Zoom GA forced upon the Association by the COVID-19 Crisis.

2. Appointment of the Presiding Chair of the 36th General Assembly – Council proposed Dirk De Corte and as there were no objections, he was appointed.

a. The Presiding Chair opened the proceedings by thanking delegates and outlined the arrangements for this unique Zoom GA. He hoped for an open, constructive, and inclusive debate and discussion. He reminded delegates of the need to give time for translation to ensure correct understanding by all.

3. Number of Members represented – Dirk De Corte, as Presiding Chair, confirmed that 20 Members had completed and returned their delegate form by the deadline of 1 July, however only 19 Members had logged on. Forty-one delegates had confirmed in writing that they would be represented but not everyone had logged on at this point. There were no proxy votes. A further seven Associates had applied to observe the GA. They were: De WAANzin (Belgium); The Questors Theatre (Great Britain); Theatrehouse Network and Poupoulo (Greece); Mary Pears (Ireland); Teatro De Balugas (Portugal); Piano Theatre (Russian Federation).

a. The Presiding Chair confirmed that the GA was legally constituted and that delegates had correctly received GA documents. Delegates from the following **19** Members (National Centres) were entitled to vote:

Austria – 6 votes; Czech Republic – 6 votes; Denmark – 6 votes; Faroes (The) – 6 votes; France – 6 votes; Germany (BAG & BDAT) – 6 votes; Great Britain – 6 votes; Israel – 6 votes; Italy – 6 votes; Japan – 6 votes; Latvia – 6 votes; Lithuania – 6 votes; Monaco – 6 votes; North Macedonia – 6 votes, Russian Federation – 6 votes; Slovakia – 6 votes, Spain – 6 votes; Sweden – 6 votes; USA – 6 votes. A total of **114 votes**.

b. Dirk De Corte confirmed that the GA was quorate. A successful test poll was held.

4. Approval of the Minute of the 35th General Assembly, Saint John, Canada

2019 – Dirk De Corte noted that minute of the 35th GA was in the online Forum Book. There were no questions and delegates were asked to vote using the online poll.

Using the online poll, the minute was approved by 95% of the delegates

5. AITA/IATA asbl Reviews 2019 - 2020

a. *Council's Report by the President Béatrice Cellario* – Dirk De Corte noted that the report of Council was in the Forum Book. He shared online the written additional comments from President Béatrice Cellario (to be found at **Annex A** of this minute). There were no further questions and delegates were asked to vote using the online poll.

Using the online poll, the minute was unanimously approved

b. President Béatrice Cellario informed the GA that during a recent Zoom Council meeting, Councillors had discussed a proposal from Councillor Christel Gbaguidi about CY Theatre (Children & Youth Theatre). He wished to make a short statement which was a follow up to his presentation at the 2019 GA in Saint John, Canada. But much more work was needed before the project would be formally announced and its financial impact was not reflected in the published budget. Council would keep Members and Associates informed of progress.

c. Christel Gbaguidi noted that there were 230 participants in the CY Theatre Facebook page. They were invited to take part in the project called *Let Them Get Into Play*. This will be a platform to unite people working together on theatre. The platform will be a way to support groups from developing countries and help them to take part in international festivals. He stressed that it was still at the idea stage and more work was needed but he hoped to see results soon. The aim was to unite those involved in AITA/IATA and help gather funds to enable AITA to become more efficient. He would write more about it and will discuss with Members and Associates. Dirk De Corte thanked him for the presentation and said delegates would hear more in Monaco.

6. Financial Review by Councillor/Treasurer Villy Dall – Villy Dall referred delegates to the financial reports starting at page 20. He noted that in the French Forum Book on page 21, 'Total Revenu' should show € 14,874 (not € 14,094). He also noted that if the actual budget was compared with that proposed in 2019 in Saint John, a saving of around € 4,000 had been made by reducing expenditure. This also reduced the deficit from € 14,000 to € 10,000. The reduced expenses were the result of a reduction in operation costs, namely the cancellation due to COVID-19 of the spring Council meeting planned for Nizhny Novgorod, Russia. Villy Dall noted that the net worth at 31 March 2020 were € 45,000 plus € 18,000 allocated funds giving a total of € 64,000 funds in the Association. Villy Dall referred to the statement by the financial controllers, both of whom were present, who had confirmed the accounts. Villy Dall asked if there were any questions.

- a. *Nadia Barcoli, Monaco* asked about the meaning of item CEC Fees € 450 Euro in the Statement of Balance. Villy Dall explained the agreement with CEC that AITA/IATA collects the CEC Membership fee at the same time as the AITA/IATA Fee and passes the funds to CEC and that € 450 was the amount still to be transferred to CEC on 31 March 2020.
- b. *Josef Hollos, Austria* asked about the impact of the increase in the Membership Fees and Associate Subscriptions on AITA/IATA. Anne Gilmour, Secretariat, noted that of the 37 Members who had paid in 2019, only four had not yet paid. Sixty-five Associates had paid to date and 17 of those who paid in 2019 had not yet done so. She suggested that the impact of COVID-19 was greater on the smaller organisations who had fewer resources. Nadia Barcoli asked about the level of the Associate Fee which Anne Gilmour confirmed was € 75, € 50, € 50, € 25 for UN (United Nations) HDI Categories (Human Development Index) 1 – 4 respectively.
- c. Dirk De Corte asked that delegates approve the financial report presented by Council using the online poll.

Using the online poll, the Financial Review was approved by 95% of the delegates

7. Discharge to Council – Dirk De Corte confirmed the meaning of this vote was that delegates would acknowledge that the GA grants discharge to the elected Councillors of AITA/IATA confirming that they have acted in good faith and within the authority granted to them in accordance with Article 17 of the AITA/IATA Constitution. Dirk asked delegates to confirm that they gave their discharge to Councillors using the online poll.

Using the online poll, delegates agreed the Discharge to Councillors unanimously

8. Budget for 2020–2021 – Villy Dall this noted that this budget revised the one presented in 2019 in Saint John, Canada. He referred to the discussion at that GA about the need for Council to reduce expenditure, which was mainly Secretariat costs and accommodation costs for Council. He noted that the Secretariat was essential for the organization – as also stated by delegates in Saint John. The deficit had been reduced from € 14,000 to € 7,800 because meetings had been held online but it was important to meet physically from time to time. He noted that this budget had reduced operation costs from € 11,500 to € 6,500. If most Council meetings were to take place by Zoom, there would be sufficient funds for one physical meeting. There were no questions and Dirk De Corte asked delegates to vote on the proposed budget for 1 Apr 2020 to 31 Mar 2021 the online poll.

Using the online poll, the Budget for 2020 – 2021 was approved by 95% of the delegates

9. Budget for 2021 – 2022 – Villy Dall noted that this was a very provisional budget but done using the same template as the 20-21 budget. It showed a deficit of € 9,300 due mainly to possible expenses required for the 2021 GA. He noted that the text about Estimated net worth at the bottom of page 29 should read 31 March 2021 (not 31 March 2022). He noted that if both budgets were realised, the net worth would only be € 27,000 as of 31 March 2022 while the remaining allocated funds will of course depend on how much AITA/IATA spends. There were no questions and Dirk De Corte asked delegates to vote on the proposed budget for 1 Apr 2021 to 31 Mar 2022.

a. *Patrick Schoenstein, France* thanked Villy Dall for his work at this difficult time. He noted that since the 2015 GA in Ypres, AITA/IATA delegates had voted on a deficit budget. He wanted delegates to be conscious of the fact that this could not go on forever as it meant AITA/IATA was putting itself in a situation of inevitable death. He would vote in favour of the budget, but all delegates had to ask themselves how they could help the organisation. In Saint John, he had taken the responsibility to organise a Council meeting to be held in April 2021.

b. There were no further comments and Dirk De Corte asked delegates to vote using the online poll.

Using the online poll, the Budget for 20201 – 2022 was approved by 90% of the delegates

c. Villy Dall then went on to raise four issues. i. Can AITA/IATA reduce Secretariat expenses? ii. Can AITA/IATA reduce its meeting and travel expenses and find Members or Associates to host AITA/IATA Council meetings so that only travel costs for secretariat and travel grants to Councillors crossing continents are incurred; iii. can the Membership Fees and Associate Subscriptions be raised again in 2022; iv. How do we get more Members (National Centres) and Associates to join?

d. Dirk De Corte thanked Villy Dall for his questions. *Torben Sundqvist, Sweden* remarked that a forum of this type was very unsuitable for the discussion of such matters. *Mary Pears, Ireland*, in reply to the issue of getting more associates was to give them a vote. Dirk De Corte noted that when delegates next meet in Monaco, this would surely be an issue that will be addressed very seriously, and that Council would work on.

10. Other proposals submitted for consideration by the General Assembly – Dirk De Corte confirmed that no proposals had been submitted to the GA by the deadline of 3 July 2020.

11. Update on the 37th World Forum and GA in 2021 (Monaco), 17 – 22 August 2021 – Although this item was on the agenda after the matter of the announcement of the 38th GA, Dirk De Corte suggested that as it came next chronologically, Councillor Pierre Cellario should make his statement. This was agreed and the statements is at **Annex B**

a. *Patrick Schoenstein, France* asked for clarification on whether Members (National Centres) had been asked to propose two or three shows for Monaco? Pierre Cellario confirmed that it was the task of the Member to do as they like, but it made the job of the Committee Mixed easier, if Members (National Centres) proposed only one show. *Patrick Schoenstein* also suggested that in future, AITA/IATA should only hold a physical GA when held alongside a Festival (2021 and 2023 and so on) and use this format for the 2022, 2024, 2026 and so on, General Assemblies.

12. Announcement of host venue for 38th General Assembly in 2022 – President Béatrice Cellario noted that no venue for the 38th GA and Festival had yet been received. Members were encouraged to consider if they would be able to host the event.

13. Questions from Associates – President Béatrice Cellario noted that AITA/IATA Associates had been invited to submit a written question. One had been received from *Andrea Bath, Associate, The Questors Theatre* from London. She had asked “How do we support the Black Lives Matter movement so that we can make a difference?” President Béatrice Cellario responded to the question with a written text which is at **Annex C**. She also remarked that it was a difficult question to deal with. As there were no responses from delegates, *Andrea Bath* responded by thanking the President for her reply which was much appreciated.

14. Questions from the floor – Dirk De Corte asked if delegates had any questions that they wished to raise.

a. *Josef Hollos, Austria* note that during the 2019 GA in Saint John, Canada, delegates asked Council and Christel Gbaguidi to work more with IDEA (International Drama/Theatre and Education Association) and ASSITEJ (International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People). Councillor Aled Rhys-Jones replied that Council was in discussion with Dagmar Höfferer of IDEA and the Austria Member (National Centre) to see how AITA/IATA could help to promote the Drama in Education congress in 2021. Christel Gbaguidi would also be included in these conversations to see how better links could be taken forward. *Dagmar Höfferer, Austria* said she has been in contact with Aled Rhys Jones and sent Council a concept which make the possibility of a face to face and online meetings. She was

still in discussion with him about this and wish to continue to make this possible. Also hoped to be in contact with Christel Gbaguidi to discuss this.

b. *Alejandro Cavadas, Spain* had a question for Villy Dall (Zoom chat). He asked "How to improve the financial situation of AITA/IATA, can we access grants from the European Union, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) or other international organisations, as well as the search for sponsors for its events?" Villy Dall thought it might be possible to access EU Funds. There has been co-operation with EFAT (European Forum of Amateur Theatre between CEC, CIFTA and NEATA) but it had failed to present projects that could generate funds. He noted that to access EU funds could be expensive because professional assistance would be needed. He added that AITA/IATA was a global organisation and EU grants were mainly for EU activities. It was an area in which Aled Rhys-Jones had experience through AMATEO (European Network for Active Participation in Cultural Activities). Aled Rhys-Jones noted that money was available in Europe and perhaps post-COVID even more money might be available for re-building communities. But applications would have to come from the European organisations – NEATA, CEC and CIFTA. If there was a willingness to come together to do this, then let us talk. He felt that AITA/IATA needed to start talking to sister organisations that are not involved in theatre such as those involved in amateur dance or singing to understand how they operate and to learn how they access funds.

Ramon Costa, Spain asked if AITA/IATA could open the website for advertisements and publicity which might bring in more money. Villy Dall noted that UNESCO only recognise one organisation for theatre and that is ITI (International Theatre Institute) for professional theatre. But President Béatrice Cellario noted that to support developing countries, every Member could access UNESCO funds via its national committees.

Josef Hollos, Austria had taken part in UNESCO meetings and wondered if more could be done to build contacts. President Béatrice Cellario noted that they sent invitations but usually too late.

15. Closing of the 36th General Assembly of AITA/IATA asbl – president Béatrice Cellario thanked Dirk De Corte for his handling of this first online AITA/IATA General Assembly and Councillor Carlos Taberheiro for his translation into Spanish. She was sorry not to be able to have the sort of discussion that usually occurred in the GA but she looked forward to seeing everyone back in Monaco in August 2021 when there would be an open discussion on finance and diversity.

The meeting closed at 14:25

Comments by President Béatrice Cellario on the 2019 – 2021 Council Report

I will talk about the highlights of the Council's activity since the last GA.

It is quite obvious to address first the impact that the health crisis has had on Culture and in particular Amateur Theater. During this period, the Council contacted its Members, who provided information on their reactions and responses to this crisis. It turns out that, as we expected, our Members were affected economically, because the show's receipts were nil, and artistically, because they suffered the cancellation of all their activities.

Most of the events expected for World Theater Day have been cancelled, and it is a shame that this happened for the first entry on the AITA/IATA website dedicated to this day.

The official AITA/IATA Festivals were impacted, the Toyama Festival in Japan was postponed, and the Rizhao Festival in China had to stop its call for nominations process. The Mondial du Théâtre de Monaco 2021 has had to reduce its format, Pierre Cellario will mention in a few minutes.

Nevertheless, in the context of Covid-19, the Council has nevertheless continued its activities and met virtually three times between May and July 2020. We are really looking forward to resuming our face-to-face meetings as soon as possible. possible.

One of the problems, which our Association has to face, remains the financial case. Our resources are dwindling, and solutions must be found to remedy this. One of these solutions would be to open up the Association to more Members and Associates. It is obvious that we will only be able to attract more Associates if AITA/IATA gives them more rights. The Council continues to work on it and will, probably for Monaco, make a proposal that goes in this direction, without harming the National Centres, without depriving them of their power or any right to express themselves.

I repeat, it was not my intention to change anything at the level of the Constitution, but the reality of the financial situation pushes us to consider another model without harming the current Members, I insist.

The issue of Children's and Youth Theater is studied by Christel Gbaguidi, who with the help of Frank Katoola, is developing a fundraising project to support the actions of the CY-Theater. Christel Gbaguidi will give you a brief update on the project he submitted to the General Assembly last year in Saint John.

We wanted to keep you informed of the conclusions of our meetings between two General Assemblies, and from Saint-John, you can follow the work of the Council thanks to the notes sent regularly by the Secretariat. So don't hesitate to step in and ask questions at any time of the year. About the next General Assemblies, I must tell you that after the one in Monaco in 2021, there is no place planned to host those of 2022 and 2023 and that we are open to all proposals for a place for these future GA as well as for the organization of official AITA/IATA festivals.

I know that organizing a GA is a huge job, but by relying, for example, on an existing festival, as Monaco does every four years, it is quite doable because the Council and our Secretariat provide efficient logistical assistance.

This year 2020 will remain deeply rooted in our memories, but not necessarily for good reasons. And it is our responsibility to ensure that AITA/IATA looks to the future with serenity and confidence. I count on everyone's solidarity.

Thank you for your attention

Comments by Pierre Cellario about the 17th Mondial du Theatre 2021

Like all cultural events, the Mondial du Théâtre is affected by the economic crisis that accompanies the health crisis. So the festival format has been reduced to 6 days (instead of 10 days). It will take place from Tuesday 17 to Sunday 22 August 2021. This festival will receive 15 troupes (instead of 24 usually), again for two performances. Ten people per group will be accommodated for 6 days. It should be noted that the support was previously 4 days for 10 people.

One Colloquy will be held each morning and two Workshops in the afternoons.

The AITA/IATA Congress will take place at the Auditorium on Saturday August 21 and Sunday August 22, Regional Committee meetings are scheduled for Friday August 20.

On the elections in Monaco: 1 President and 4 Councillors

VERY IMPORTANT: applications for the participation of the groups in the festival must be sent before November 10, 2020. I appeal to the National Centers on this subject.

The Joint Committee will select the participants at the end of November 2020 and the results of the selection will be communicated at the beginning of December.

We look forward to seeing you and celebrating the Amateur Theater.

Response to the question about Black Lives Matter

English

AITA/IATA is an association which, by its nature, composition and goals, is always concerned with the protection of human dignity and the defence of the values of respect for the person, whoever they are.

But we do not play politics, nor do we interfere with religions and beliefs.

This silence does not mean that we are neutral, on the contrary. It is through our actions, our commitments, our projects, the spirit that drives us all within our association, that we offer the tools to fight against all forms of discrimination.

Everyone can join us, whatever the colour of their skin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, political orientation, everyone has their place in our fight for "education and understanding through theatre" which is the currency of AITA/IATA.

We are convinced that Amateur Theatre in its educational role is our best tool to raise awareness. If we remain true to our role then we can greatly influence change for the future.

There are many causes to defend: equality between men and women, the fight against paedophilia and femicide, the fight against racism, the defence of oppressed minorities, the defence of the environment ...

For that we must play our educational role, without being either opportunistic, nor detached from reality. The cause we must fight for is amateur theatre, because it is through this that we will be able to influence the future.

Finally, I would like to announce that the Council has agreed that 'Diversity and Amateur Theatre' will be the theme we will address at the 2021 Forum in Monaco.

Thank you for your attention.