

# **The Competitiveness Institute/ Asociación Competitividad**

## **IV General Assembly**

### **Ordinary Session**

Tucson (United States), 31.October 2001, 9.30am

#### Minute of the Assembly

Since the Secretary of the Association, Mr. Alberto Pezzi, could not be present for excused professional reasons, the Executive Committee Treasurer Elisabeth Waelbroeck-Rocha as a temporary secretary. She opens the ordinary session by reading the minute of the third General Assembly held in Glasgow (United Kingdom on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2000). The minute is approved by unanimity of the members present at the Assembly.

Elisabeth Waelbroeck Rocha made a brief introduction and illustrates the main activities carried out by The Competitiveness Institute since the last Assembly. During the last period member of the Executive Committee, Mr. Robert Pollock resigned from his position for personal reasons. Due to the limited budget available the activity of the Institute in 2001 has been limited to a maintenance of the website and of some basic promotional activities of the association. The institute employed an internship student, Franziska Blunck, in order to fulfil the day to day activities and as a research assistant. Most requests from members and other people came on contact addresses. The electronic newsletter has been issued one time. Also the work on the manual, given from UNIDO, on cluster development has been continued. Despite the difficult world-wide situation due to the terrorist attack against the United States short before the Conference, the participation number rose up to nearly 150. The report of activity has been approved by unanimity by the members.

In her function as Treasurer of the Association, Elisabeth Waelbroeck-Rocha illustrated the financial statements of the Institute and the actual financial position. Revenues come only from membership fees since the Conferences are locally organised. Expenses could be minimised in this form ( only real expense are internship salary). The financial statement has been approved by unanimity by the members.

The President Emiliano Duch illustrates the new positions in The Competitiveness Institute and explains the structure of the Board of Directors as previewed in the last General Assembly. Since Robert Pollock resigned, Ifor Ffowcs-Williams nominates Rod Brown for this position and as Vice-president for Asia/Pacific and justifies his nomination. Emiliano Duch asks for other candidates. After no other suggestions followed, the General Assembly votes in favour of Rod Brown and he himself accepts his call to the Board of Directors.

The President Emiliano Duch proposes now a new structure of the Association and the creation of three areas (Americas/ EMEA/ AP) with three directors being one of these the President in a rotary system. This should allow the Institute to be closer to the needs of its members and to services, but still preserve the international world-wide structure. Each of these areas should employ a research assistant like Franziska Blunck in Barcelona Headquarter. First President will be Ifor Ffowcs-Williams and responsible for AP with Rod Brown. Emiliano Duch will be Vice-president for EMEA and Bob Breault for Americas.

In the plan of activities he reminds of the three original objectives, which he sees mainly reached, especially in the first point, even if still there has to be done lot in education and research. The discussion to be led in the coming year is how TCI could translate his knowledge into a form of training.

A part of that, the Institute should play a more active role in conferences, which are not organised by them. Main effort should also be made on methodology and professional practitioners development. The incoming information needs not only to be collected but also filtered. The database of Clusters on the web site has not seen many contributions from members side during the last year, nevertheless most member value such information very high. In order to provide a larger database and to rise confidence into access security, it is agreed that only those who contribute with their own clusters should have access to this database. Another new idea is to collect CVs in order to provide interesting contacts. A part from this, work on the UNIDO cluster manual will continue under the supervise of Frederic Richard. Newsletter will be published every two month from now on. Every group should organise inter activities for its members (f.e.:dinner). In order to give the members an additional value of their membership, each members will get promotional TCI material (f.e.: full for presentations and small brochures in pdf- format) and a logo will be provided which will certificate the TCI membership and can be used on correspondence and presentation slides

Some of the members present in the room make some suggestions and critical on these topics. Mr. Andy Haddon (UK) asks for the development of an international Cluster network community and the technology to do so. Ifor Ffowcs-Williams sees this as one of the next themes to enable benchmarking and to learn from each other, which is one of the principle aims of the cluster database. Haddon also suggests introducing environmental policies and principals on economic development in the constitution of the Institute to guide the membership. He also asks for training facilities for organisations and subsidies and student membership fees.

Mrs. Paquita Lamacraft (USA) suggests subsidies for personal professional development and suggests to research on the connection of international clusters. She refers on her own work in two case studies in Tourism and Multiculture.

Mr. Alec Hansen (USA) points out the importance of regional organisation and the chance to broaden and too deepen in the same time, he asks how to organise the separation into areas and suggests three

meetings in the next year for the Americas group. Bob Breault gives an example of a regional meeting in Mexico.

Mr. Jeff Olingy suggests including budget proposals for the next year.

Mr. Bob Breault points out the availability of the videotapes of some sessions online.

Ms. Rula Sadik (USA) points out the danger of the Conference getting a promotion for consulting without offering real practitioners practice experiences. She makes a call for more papers which will not only document the success. She misses open intellectual debates off the record panel and the lack of discussing failures during the conference, which would be a great opportunity to learn from for everybody. Consultants and clients should be more open to share their cluster experience.

Ms. Ligia Chinchilla asks for participation of members in a Conference in Guatemala in September 2002 and offers to represent The Competitiveness Institute.

Mr. Lonny Kaufman suggests a sliding scale participation fee in the conferences since not all interest people can afford it.

Mr. Ifor Ffowcs Williams in his function as the new President of the Association thanks all the organizers of the successful conferences, especially Bob Breault and all the volunteers and people who made this possible. He informs the members that next year annual conference will be held in Cairns, Australia. Then he gives the word to Mr. Antoni Subirà, President of the Board of Advisors, who closes the session thanking the organizers and giving a view over the development of cluster working in the future.

Tucson, 31 of October 2001

Mr. Emiliano Duch, former President

Mr. Ifor Ffowcs-Williams, President

Mr. Alberto Pezzi, Secretary General