

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING  
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY INQAAHE  
HELD DURING THE 7TH CONFERENCE OF THE INQAAHE  
IN DUBLIN, IRELAND  
15 April 2003**

**Present board members:**

Maria Jose Lemaitre del Campo (President)  
Ton Vroeijenstijn (secretary)  
Richard Lewis (treasurer)  
Marjorie Peace Lenn  
Ethley London  
Birute Mockiene  
Masteru Ohnami  
Mala Singh  
David Woodhouse  
Seamus Puirseil  
Lee Harvey

**Absent**

Wong Wai Sum  
Arum Gnamam

**Members present**

About 90 persons were present, 46 of whom were representatives of full members and hence had voting rights.

**1. Welcome by the president Maria Jose Lemaitre del Campo.**

The president welcomed the members, present at the meeting. The first part, about the Principles of Good Practice, is an open plenary session in which everybody may participate in the discussion and gives her/his opinion. But because of the possibility that the discussion might lead to vote the session was also a meeting of the General Assembly which she took great pleasure in opening.

**2. The Principles of Good Practice (PGP)**

Working group 3 of the INQAAHE had prepared a document "Principles of Good Practice". The group was chaired by Ton Vroeijenstijn(the Netherlands) and its members were: Arum Gnamam from India, Ernesto Villaneuva from Argentina, Jaques L'écuyer from Canada, Seamus Puirseil from Ireland, Jim Rogers from the US, Maria Jose Le Maitre from Chile and David Woodhouse from Australia. The document has been endorsed by the board and is now for

discussion. The original text is annex one of the agenda. But as a result of discussion in the board, some changes are made. The new text was handed out.

Ton Vroeijsstijn gave a short introduction to the PGP. He expressed the hope that the discussion would not be about the wording, but much more about the ideas behind it. It was also a first step. There should be first a discussion about the PGP itself. A second step would be a discussion on how to use it and how to make certain that they become effective.

During the general discussion, several questions were raised and remarks made:

- Although the preamble makes clear that the Principles should be interpreted in context of the mission of a QA-agency, greater emphasis should be placed on the point in the main body of the document;
- The PGP are 'nice', but an important question is missing: What is QA all about?
- What is the purpose of the whole exercise? Why are we doing it?
- The concepts, like the concept of independence, are of limited value unless there is some agreement as to their meaning;
- The concepts used in the paper, like the concept of freedom, are not capable of precise definition;
- The PGP are too general;
- Will the PGP be applicable to all agencies? Agencies are very different from each other; they have different functions and carry out different tasks;
- There is some difficulty with the topic “publicity” and “publication”. What does this mean? What should be made public?
- Are we not looking at the wrong problem? Instead of QA, recognition is much more important. There should be more co-operation with the ENIC/NARIC and the issue of recognition should be given greater attention;
- There are concerns that the PGP will be seen, and used, as a set of values to help establish criteria that would be used to check the quality of an EQA-agency;
- It might be a good idea to formulate the PGP at global level, however, it more important to consider what is happening at regional level. “One size fits all” is not a good starting point. The European Network (ENQA) is active in thinking about the criteria that would identify a good agency. The addition in the new text, is the reference that external review as an instrument for internal quality assurance is endorsed. In fact number 1 (the mission statement) and number 8 (internal quality assurance are the most important Principles);
- If we start now with these Principles, where will it end up? They are now only Principles, but will they be used as criterion for full membership?
- The principles are based on the traditional approach to QA (self assessment, peer review, public report). It is time to think about new ways.

The working group tried to clarify some of the topics raised:

- The PGP should be regarded simply as a first step. They should be seen as advice and guidelines for an agency. They are applicable for well-funded agencies as well for new agencies. It is an instrument that follows good practice;
- There might be a future development, when the PGP become more elaborately based on experiences with the PGP;
- The first step is to see if they are applicable or not. We can discuss the wording because they are ambiguous and not clear. It will not be possible to find the right formulation in a meeting

like this. It would be a good idea to organise a pilot project with QA-agencies from different parts of the world and ask them to have an external review, based on the PGP. By doing so, we will learn much more about the usefulness of the PGP;

- Of course, there should be a good link with the regional developments. The PGP should be seen as minimum requirements. If for example, Europe, goes one step further and formulates higher Principles, that will be no problem;
- The PGP as such does not hinder new methods. For example the Principles do not require the use of external panels, the relevant section applies only if the agency decides to use external panels. Furthermore, the PGP always will be in development. They should not become static.

At the end of the discussion, the President, proposed that the meeting accepts the PGP as a first step and considers the document as it is now as a working document. She asked the members to consider the PGP and see if they can be used and proposed the setting up of a working group to develop a more precise text, based on the discussion during this hour and experiences in applying the PGP.

**The General Assembly endorses the PGP as a working paper and commends it to the INQAAHE members for consideration and use.**

The President thanked working group 3 for preparing the document and said that the board will set up a new committee to oversee further development and to discuss the ways by which the Principles might be used.. The PGP will be on the agenda of the INQAAHE-workshop 2004.

### **3. The future of INQAAHE.**

The President gave a short introduction. INQAAHE has, during the conference, been advised several times to change its name and to look for an easier one. More importantly, however, at this stage the discussion is about the future of INQAAHE. Ton Vroeijsenstijn has published his view on future developments of INQAAHE in the QA-newsletter. The QA-newsletter can be found on the website. This article was written on a personal basis. The board has used the paper for discussion.

- **Criteria for membership/screening membership**

The President proposed that the board set up a small sub-committee of the board for screening applicants. So far this has been done by the secretary, but a more formal way is necessary. The sub-committee will also screen the old members, to see if they are rightly a full or associate member. The screening will be done on the basis of the criteria included in the current constitution.

**The General Assembly accepted the proposal.**

- **Future activities**

The President expressed the view that it is important that INQAAHE should become more visible. INQAAHE has to rethink its aims and activities. There are three important topics:

- *The relationship between INQAAHE and the regional networks*  
It is important to improve relations with the regional networks. The main question is how can the developments in the regions be fed into the activities of INQAAHE and how can INQAAHE support the regional networks? What is the best relationship?
- *Publication/dissemination policy of INQAAHE*  
The publication and dissemination policy of INQAAHE should be reconsidered. INQAAHE should try to get a clear voice on quality assurance topics and on Higher Education in general.
- *Relationship between INQAAHE and international organisations*  
The relationships with international organisations like OECD, UNESCO are becoming more and more important. How can they be improved?

The proposal is to set up a committee for each theme. In the committee there will be at least one board member and some other INQAAHE-members. The aim of the committees is to come forward with proposals for the board taking into account how the activities will be financed. The committees will report before the end of October. The board will make a proposal for an activity plan for discussion during the INQAAHE workshop 2004.

The President stressed that the board hopes to see greater involvement in working groups by those who are not board members. Those interested in helping in this way were asked by one of the board members.

**The General Assembly accepted the proposal to set up:**

- A committee for the relation with the regional networks
- A committee for publication/dissemination policy
- A committee for the relation with international organisations

**The outcomes of the committees will lead to an activity plan to be produced by the board for discussion in the workshop 2004**

- **The membership fee**

The President introduced the theme and said that this is a very important topic. INQAAHE has to raise its income. If INQAAHE wants to have a more structured secretarial support and start new activities and initiatives it would be necessary to increase the income. The board will now NOT propose a rise of the fee at this time but would first wish to sound out the opinion of the General Assembly about differentiation of the fee.

The proposal to the GA now is:

- To accept the principle of differentiation of fees. Differentiation will be based on international established categories;
- The board will come up with a proposal not later than three months from now;
- There will be an electronic vote about the proposal;
- The final decision needs to be made before the 1st of October, so the fee can be settled for 2004.

The General Assembly accepted the suggestion and awaits for the elaborated proposals of the board. The board has also to look at the differentiation of the fee between the types of members.

#### **4. The choice of the venue INQAAHE-workshop 2004**

There were two offers: one from Japan and one from Oman. There was a short introduction by representatives of each.

**The General Assembly decided that the INQAAHE-workshop 2004 will be held in Oman.**

The president thanked Japan for the offer and congratulated Oman on their selection by the General Assembly.

#### **5. The choice of the venue 8th INQAAHE-conference 2005**

There were three offers: Australia, Hong Kong and New Zealand. After an introduction by the bidders and after some confusion about how the voting should be done, the General Assembly came to a decision.

**The General Assembly decided that the 8th INQAAHE- conference 2005 will be held in New Zealand.**

The President thanks Australia and Hong Kong for the bid and congratulated New Zealand.

#### **6. Endorsement of Minutes and reports.**

The following Minutes and reports had been e-mailed to members and were also accessible on the website:

- Minutes of the GA meeting Bangalore
- Minutes of the board meeting in Jamaica
- Report of the president
- Report of the secretary
- Report of the treasurer

**All minutes and reports were approved by the General Assembly with thanks to all efforts and energy of the board members concerned.**

Lee Harvey gave a short report about the Journal. There will be a special issue with the conference papers. Participants who wished to be included were invited to submit contributions that should not exceed 3000 words.

Lee Harvey raised the issue of the relationship between the Journal and INQAAHE. The Journal is not the mouth piece of INQAAHE. The Journal has a Forum page, that can be used for INQAAHE information but if the Network wishes to establish closer links with members it should do so by developing the existing Newsletter or establishing a new publication.

## **7. Outcomes of the elections**

The President gave the outcomes of the elections. The voting rate this time was higher, 50% of the members had voted. Those elected are:

- President: Richard Lewis
- Members:
  - Steven Crow
  - Dirk van Damme
  - Dorte Kristoffersen
  - Mala Singh
  - Wai Sum Wong.

The president first thanked the three board members who have served a long time on the board: Marjorie Peace Lenn, David Woodhouse and Ton Vroeijsstijn who has done a lot for INQAAHE. She also liked to thanks the outgoing members, who have served a shorter time in the board: Ethley, Birute, Ohnami and Gnanam.

Before Maria Jose Lemaitre del Campo handed over the presidency to Richard Lewis, she thanked HETAC for the excellent organisation of the conference and for their splendid hospitality. HETAC has done a great job.

## **8. Changing the presidency**

Maria Jose Lemaitre del Campo handed over the presidency to Richard Lewis. The new president makes a short statement. He said that to be the new president is in many ways exciting, because there are so many new challenges. On the other side there is a certain hesitation. It is very difficult to be the successor of Maria Jose. With her calmness and steady determination she had achieved a lot for INQAAHE. It will not be easy to equal her. The president thanked Maria Jose Lemaitre for all she had done. He also thanked Ton Vroeijsstijn especially, David Woodhouse and Marjory Peace Lenn for their great contribution to the development of INQAAHE.

The challenges for the future are high. He hopes that the board will be able to involve as many as members as possible.

## **9. Closing of the meeting**

The new president closed the meeting at 17.15, thanking again HETAC for the organisation. He also thanked all members for their presence and participation in the meeting.