

Signis India Annual General Assembly on 25th February 2016 at Mangalore

Minutes

The day began with Holy Eucharist. Bishop Salvadore Lobo presided over the Holy Eucharist. The business session began at 9.00 am with a prayer lead by Fr. Ashok Vaghela SJ interceding to take decisions according to the will of God on the business day.

President of Signis India Mr. Sunil Lucas officially declared the Signis India General Body meeting - 2016 open and welcomed all.

Roll Call:

President requested the secretary to conduct the Roll Call. Fr Victor Vijay Lobo, the national Secretary, Signis India, read out the names of the delegates from different regions with voting rights and distributed the voting Cards.

There were 48 delegates with voting rights. Andhra Pradesh 3, Kerala 3, Tamil Nadu 5, Agra 6, Western 5, Bengal 3, Bihar & Jharkhand 4, Karnataka 6, Orissa 1, MP & Chhattisgarh 3, Northern Region 3, North East 0, National 1, Office Barriers 3 and Screening 2.

Welcoming New Members:

President Informed that he has received an application from Sr Christine from National service team of SCC to be national Member of Signis India. She will be representing the Media desk of SCC in India.

Other new members from MP and Chattisgarh – Mr Stanly Hector; From Karnataka: Fr Moses Lobo, Mr Austine Crasta, Ms Jeraline and SRA Sisters Mangalore. All were welcomed to Signis India with applaud by members.

Later Secretary presented the Timetable and agenda for the assembly. Fr Balashoury Proposed and Fr Norbert Seconded to approve. It was passed unanimously by the members.

Presidential address:

In his presidential address, Mr. Sunil Lucas explained about the negotiation he did with the Signis Office at Brussels regarding the membership fees dues. As there was financial constraints Signis India had not paid the fees for two years and had lost good standing. After due request with Mr Alvito General Secretary the Annual membership fees to Signis has been reduced from 1000 euros to 300 Euros.

About the National members, President Informed that Boscom and Jescom have contacted him and they have expressed their desire to continue their membership with Signis India. They will pay their outstanding arrears to the secretary and renew their membership.

Later Mr. Sunil gave a glimpse about the registration process of Signis, to be as Society or as Trust which is nearing to come for a good conclusion and mentioned that the financial condition of Signis India which was bad in the past has come to good condition at present.

The projects from the Individuals are not approved without the guarantee letter by Regional or Diocesan Social Communication secretary, that he takes full responsibility to implement the project. He said it saddens him that Signis being a lay association, lay people are deprived of getting the projects. He said the Signis assembly being supreme body should address this issue and find solution.

Sunil mentioned about the Mother Teresa Film Festival (MTIFF) to be hosted by Signis India this year in October and planning to welcome all the regions to host it. He gave the details of previous 3 MTIFF. He proposed the house that If Signis Asia agrees to change venue for Signis Asia meeting, that he welcomes them to Kolkata as they too can be part of MTIFF. He expressed his desire that MTIFF4 should have more shows than of previous ones.

Minutes of General Body Meeting 2015 Patna

Fr. Victor Vijay Lobo presented the minutes of previous National assembly which was held in Patna January 2015. As the report was sent to members in advance to this meeting, there was no much correction Dr. Magimai pointed out the omissions in the report. 1. Objections were raised to the Screening procedure and clarifications were sought. The assembly was uncomfortable with the screening procedure. 2. Secondly the screening committee should be more considerate to the members. The objective is to help the members and not unnecessarily criticize the members and reject the project. 3. To allocate funds to the executive and screening committee members to travel in flights locally to know what the members are doing with the projects. This will help the members to be more considerate to their projects. Fr. John Paul Proposed and Fr Joly Vadakan seconded to pass the report. With the votes, the report was passed unanimously subject to some points to be incorporated.

Financial report:

Fr. Victor Vijay presented the financial report briefly along with opening, closing balances and cash in hand and Fr. Balashoury enquired about status of Corpus fund and whether Signis India is having full time staff, Secretary replied saying Corpus fund is not yet created as the place and venue for the permanent office is not clear and there is full time staff for Signis India office.

Mr. Magimai asked explanations about Asian assembly expenditure and clarification about the travelling expenses Rs 1,16,667 and the secretary explained the Asian assembly expense include travel expenses, registration fee, boarding and lodging for president, secretary at Indonesia and he explained about the travel cost of Rs 84,000 of previous year, which was spent for the National assembly in Bangalore and the other amount is given to the National Executive for the governing body meeting and National assembly meeting in Patna.

Further Magimai suggested as the huge amount is spent on Asian assembly and suggested that the details of the deliberations at Asian assembly should be shared during National assembly. Sunil answered saying, during the Bangalore Assembly, Dr Magimai had shared the proceeding of Asian assembly held in Rome and Fr Ashok will share in the afternoon the proceedings at the Asian assembly at Sri Lanka .

Later Secretary continued with presenting Income & Expenditure account with Balance Sheet. Fr. Balashoury proposed, Fr. Norbert seconded the proposal to approve the account. President asked the floor for vote to approve the account and the assembly unanimously approved.

Secretary presented the financial statement of the current year till 10th Feb 2016.

Dr Magimai pointed that, nothing is coming to the regions from the national executive. The regions do not have funds they are struggling. Some funds are to be shared with the region. He suggested to subsidize the national assembly. President said from next year the boarding and lodging will be subsidized and the travel needs to be taken care off for the National assembly.

Later secretary presented the **budget Proposal for the next financial year 2016-2017**. He informed the assembly, the funds of National project will not be able to get, unless Signis India has its own Pan Card and 12A.

Mr. Magimai appreciated the proposed budget for the region program and asked for the details. Secretary said as it was decided in governing body meeting at Chennai, that each region would organize a follow up training program in the respective regions on the National assembly Theme “Social Media and Family” and each region will be given a subsidy of Rs 25,000/- and by end of June 2016 all the region should send the proposal and the program should be held by Oct 2016.

Later. Sunil Lucas asked assembly for approval and Fr. Edwin Vas proposed, Fr. Adaikal Raj seconded the proposed budget. The account was unanimously approved.

Approval of the amendments to the constitution.

The Secretary informed that during the last National Annual General Body Meeting at Patna it was proposed to circulate the proposed amendments of the constitution to all the Signis members prior to the National Assembly this year. He said he has already circulated and he had asked the members to reply by 10th of Feb 2016.

Passing of proposal of Constitution

1st Amendment of constitution 2.2 ‘Print media’ to be deleted, 47 votes for and 1 against. President discussed with assembly and it was proposed to replace the word journalism at the deleted part of constitution 2.2.

2.2 In this Constitution, Social Communication includes all the fields relating to communication and information such as ***Journalism***, Radio, Television, Film, Audio- Visuals, Information Technology, New Media, Graphics, Group Media, ***Social Media***, Folk Arts, Performing Arts, Fine Arts, Media Education, Public Relations, Production and Distribution of Media programmes, Training, Academic Teaching and Research

2nd point 4.1.6

Addition institution and centers where added and to remove CCBI as CBCI includes all Sui iuris churches their centers and institution it was proposed to remove CCBI and 46 for and 2 abstained.

4.1.6. To collaborate with the various Offices, Commissions, institutes and centres of the CBCI

3rd point 6.2.1

Suggestion to replace the local Bishop of the place, by the applicant is located with Chairman Bishop of CBCI OSC (Office for the social communication Commissions). With much deliberation it was proposed for voting the floor defeated the proposal of replacing the Chairman Bishop with the local ordinary and so no change is done to the point constitution 6.2.1.

The proposal voted as follows: 7 for, 35 against and 3 abstained. Sunil asked the floor, if the point of order to be on both and asked for the suggestions from the members in the assembly. The floor proposed for further amendment to this number and adds chairman Bishop of OSC. This decision will be taken in next general assembly. Bishop Salvador Lobo added to recommend the suggestion to the National member and he said the role of local ordinary is minimum and so it has to be the approval to be from Chairman Bishop of OSC.

As the amendment to the proposed constitution was not taken up and Sr. Christine who submitted her application without the signature of local ordinary as per the constitutional requirement, President informed her membership is in hold and as soon as she submits the documents her membership will be approved and was requested to give back the voting cards. Fr. Stanley also went out due to some work thus the members of voting came up to 46 voting in number.

6.2.1. The application for National membership shall be addressed to the National President of SIGNIS INDIA at least three months prior to the National General Assembly, supported by the recommendation of two Active National Members and the ***Bishop of the place where the applicant is located***

4th 6.2.2 The missing point National was added and approved unanimously. 42 for and 4 abstain the word National was incorporated and the motion was passed in favor.

6.2.2. Application for *National* membership shall be screened by the National Secretary/Treasurer and presented to the National General Assembly which will confer membership through a secret ballot. A simple majority in favour will confer membership to the applicant.

5th 7.1 On suspension of membership the term *suspended automatically* is replaced with *ceases*. And the floor voted Unanimously with 46 for.

7.1. SUSPENSION: Membership of a person at the National, Regional level *ceases* If, a Member:

6th 7.3 The addition “After issuing a clarification letter for a period of one month, if the person does not respond then” added to the existing clause, and the floor voted unanimously with 46 for. On the motion been passed for one month Fr. Bala and Mr Magi suggested for 3 months and the full house of 46 voted for 3 months and the motion was passed.

7.3. TERMINATION: After Issuing a clarification letter for *a period of ONE Month* If the person does not respond then the Regional or National Membership maybe terminated by a two-thirds majority of the members present by a secret ballot at the Regional or National General Assembly respectively.

7th 10.1 Every active member shall have one vote in her/his respective regional (to remove the national) floor voted unanimously with 46 for

10.1. Every Active Member shall have one vote in her/his respective Regional General Assembly. The vote of the National Members shall be subject to Article 9.4.2. Suspended members do not have the right to vote.

8th 10.2 Suggestion for giving the voting rights through proxy, though registered email or SMS was suggested and approved unanimously.

10.2. Member is entitled to exercise his/her voting rights through proxy, provided the proxy is given in writing, through registered email or SMS and is submitted to the Regional/National President/Secretary prior to the commencement of the Regional/National Assembly respectively.

9th 12.1.5 Approves the recommendation of the screening committee (to be removed) the motion was passed unanimously.

~~12.1.5. Approves the recommendation of the Screening Committee.~~

~~**10th 12.1.6** Appoints the auditor annually regional level (Remove) and the motion was defeated and it was been removed.~~

11th 13.4.1 The proposal to change from 3 months to 1 month and proposal was approved with voting 44 for and 2 no, and the motion was passed for one month.

13.4.1. Inform all the Regional Members about the date, venue and agenda of the next Regional Assembly at least one month prior to the Assembly.

12th 15.1.1.1 Proposal to give voting right for 2 National screening committee members with one voting right each. 44 yes and 2 no and the motion was passed in favor.

15.1.1.1 The two National screening committee members with one vote each.

13th 15.7.1.6 To appoint the auditor was approved unanimously.

15.7.1.6. Approves the National Secretary-Treasurer's audited statement of Accounts, and the National budget; and appoints the auditor annually

Registration Fee (By Laws)

By Law 2 Suggestion to enhance the membership fees was proposed but members unanimously disapproved the proposal so the membership fees remains the same.

02. The annual Membership fee is fixed as follows:

i) Individual Member	Rs.250/-
ii) Diocesan Centre or OSC, Religious Centre	Rs.400/-
iii) Regional Centre	Rs.700/-
iv) National Member	Rs.2000/-

These may be reviewed from time to time.

By Law 3 The addition "Failure of this payment for two consecutive years will make the region 'Not in good standing' and lose its voting right at the National assembly". Suggestion 3 years than 2 years. 33 Yes, 7 Votes No and 4 abstaining.

03. Out of the Membership fees collected, the Regional Secretary-Treasurer shall send to the National Secretary-Treasurer the amount specified. (as per Article 13.4.3.). Of the balance amount, 50% shall be retained for regional expenses, and 50% shall be sent to the National Secretary-Treasurer for national expenses. Failure of this payment for Three consecutive years will make the region "Not in good standing" and lose its voting right at the National assembly.

By Law 4 Service charges. The floor suggested to change the term service charges to contribution as the service charge will incur the service taxes it was suggested to change the term service charges to contribution.

04. The National Secretary-Treasurer shall collect Contribution from the project holders 3% of the subsidy received. Of this amount, she/he shall retain 50% for the obligations of the National Association, and *put the remaining 50% into a separate corpus fund to be created and used exclusively for the purpose of asset creation for SIGNIS India. This practice*

shall continue for a period of 10 years till 2024 or until Rupees One crore is achieved, whichever is earlier. Thereafter the balance 50% shall be shared equally with the regions.

Fr. David suggested to consult the auditor before creating Corpus Fund. Bishop Salvador Lobo suggested to create reserve fund instead of corpus fund. Secretary also suggested when 3% of the projects funds received which has to be paid to the national office should not be paid from the FC account but could be paid from the local contribution which is mentioned in the project proposal.

Fr. Stanley raised the objection that it is unethical to collect the 3% from the funds received. Then the president explained why that contribution has to be done. He said as the screening committee meeting and the courier charges incur the expense which has to be borne by the project holders so this 3% is collected. And the motion was approved unanimously.

Regional and National Reports:

In the afternoon, the regional Secretaries/ Presidents presented their annual report. Fr Jose Murickan presented the report of NISCORT and Fr Wilson presented the report of NATFoM.

Report from the screening committee.

Secretary informed that the Asian screening committee has approved the project proposals sent by Signis India last year. They have not altered the amount recommended by Signis India Screening committee meeting.

Later he presented the Signis India Screening committee report. He pointed out the some common mistakes done in the project proposal

There were total 60 Projects.

1. There need to be improvements in project writing.
2. The logic in the project is missing. There is proper flow. The aim of the project and activities planned do not coincide.
3. Some of the regions have just seen the projects. They have not screened them. The mistakes in the projects are not corrected. The Screening committee report of some regions are ambiguous.
4. The Format of Project application is not followed, like not writing the date of the activity, exceeding the page limit, calculation mistakes, No reference to the Pastoral Plan, Not printing back to back, Signature of the project holder is missing. No completion report is given, Audited statement is not submitted. No Productions are submitted.
5. The Project is not implemented according the project proposal submitted. E,g. The Project was submitted for training but the equipment is purchased.
6. Projects from Individual persons are recommended as they are sent by the Local Diocese Social Communication commission secretary.

Members suggested that when the funds are sent they should mention for what it has been granted. Screening committee answered saying when the funds sent through the Nunciature to the diocese usually they mention for what it has been sanctioned. Letters are sent from Signis International Secretariat.

Fr David: suggested as many are depending on the subsidy from PSPF the screening committee should be considerate in approving the projects.

Dr Magimai suggested visit personally the of the place of the applicant. The money which is allotted for particular project has to be strictly used for that only. The agencies which give the funds directly contact the project applicant and ask for the report

- Later the Secretary presented the this year's screening committee approved amount

Later the Magimai, Pointed out that after the secretary asked clarification from Alvito the project from Lay Individuals not accepted. He asked for the clarification why the secretary asked the clarification is it to deprive the lay Individuals. The secretary replied saying the guidelines which came from General Secretary on Project screening where not clear, so he had asked for the clarification. He further said Individual member does not mean only lay person it also for any Individual member of Signis either lay or religious.

Gurram Pratap Reddy pointed out that they have been writing the project through the Regional centre Amruthavani as Legal holder. He asked for the clarification why it has been not taken now. Fr Stephen clarified saying, from Patna Diocese, the lay Individual persons have collaborated with the diocese and submitted one project. This project has come from the diocese and not from Individual persons. Here in the case of Gurram Pratap, it has not come from Amruthavani. He further said, the diocesan communications centre director should give a letter guarantee to implement the project. Person responsible for the project should be Diocesan Communications centre director.

Fr Ashok suggested as the screening at the regions are not up to the mark he asked whether the Screening can be done only the National level. He was answered saying the Regional screening body is to help the members/applicants to write the projects properly.

Magimai suggested to organize a workshop on writing the project. Nirmal suggested to select the experienced persons to screening committee at the regional level.

Fr Norbert asked the regional Screening committee members to be more responsible in the Screening the projects.

In Conclusion to the discussion on Screening, President said that he would write to the General Secretariat asking for the consideration for the Individual member's projects.

The Secretary informed the house that the project funds at the PMS office cannot be transferred to Signis India Account as we do not have PAN and 12A. Diocese of Mangalore may not receive the funds of Signis India. So requested to hasten the process of registration. Sunil Lucas spoke on the registration of the Signis India as Society or Trust. He asked whether the mandate can be

given to Governing board to deliberate and come to a conclusion on whether to register as Trust or Society. The members agreed unanimously for that and asked the president to keep them informed about the decision. They also requested to incorporate the suggestions given by the house. Document has to be circulated to all the members.

Fr Sunil Damor raised his concern of his region Odisha, he asked what has to be done when the regional team becomes dysfunctional, who takes the responsibility. President asked him to write to national office regarding the status of the region and the national team will take a decision and will help the region.

Next National Assembly Place and Venue:

Regions suggested - Tamilnadu and MP& CG.

As the National assembly of 2016 was supposed to be held in Chennai, but due to unavoidable reasons venue had to be changed. TN was requested to hold SINA 2017 and they accepted to hold it Chennai in February. It was decided to take the theme of Signis Asia assembly for SINA 2017.

Next Governing Board meeting:

Secretary informed that in the last Governing board meeting the place and Dates are suggested is venue Shillong and the dates June 21st and 22nd 2016

Secretary informed that as per the decision of Governing Board meeting in Chennai, he has opened the official Email ID for all the regions. As many of regions use their personal email Id, when the new office bearers elected, they are not able to access the previous email correspondence. These email IDs will be shared with the president and secretary and Vice president of each region. He said any future communication will be done through official email ID only.

Evaluation:

Members expressed their happiness on organization of SINA 2016 in Mangalore. They appreciated the work done by Fr Richard the Regional Secretary, Karnataka and Fr Victor Vijay Lobo Regional President. The Topics and the resource persons were good. They pointed that there would have been some group sessions. Members express their sadness over the absence of Office bearers of many regions. They also suggested to send regular information to the members. Secretary asked the members to send their activity reports to publish in the Signis India website

Later the all the regional presidents were honored with a Memento and Shawl. The Meeting concluded with the words of gratitude from the President Sunil Lucas.

Fr Victor Vijay Lobo

Secretary, Signis India