

**WORLD ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS
GUIDELINES
AND
SELECTION PROCESS
FOR HOST/VENUE**

28th July, 2008

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I. INTRODUCTION

When Zarathushtis migrated from Iran to India centuries ago (8th to 10th centuries) they found a fertile place to live and worship in freedom, and came to be known as the 'Parsis'. This was the first diaspora. In the 1900s, with the liberalization afforded by Reza Shah Pahlavi, another wave arrived and settled in Western India, generally known in India as the 'Iranis'. Attempts by the Parsis of India to dialogue with Zarathushtis in the mother country of Iran in the 17th and 18th centuries, have been recorded in the *Rivayats*. Since the latter half of the 20th century Zarathushtis from the mother country of Iran (especially since the revolution in Iran in 1979), as well as from the diaspora on the Indian subcontinent, have settled in other parts of the globe notably the U. S. A., UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Middle East, Europe, Far East and other places, which may generally be termed as the 'Western Diaspora'. As early as in the 1960s a need was felt to bring together Zarathushtis who had spread all over the globe to dialogue and discourse. Iran took the lead in holding the first World Zoroastrian Congress, in Tehran, in 1960. Subsequent congresses have been held in Bombay, Tehran Houston and London. A record of the past World Zoroastrian Congresses held has been compiled for your reference, see Appendix 3.

II. VISION AND MISSION

The Vision and Mission for our worldwide Zarathushti community, and consequently for the World Zoroastrian Congress, as developed at the "Coming Together Roundtable" at the World Congress in London, 2005, is:

VISION: To nurture a caring, compassionate, harmonious, altruistic, observant, esteemed and prosperous community, with respect for diversity in belief and practice.

MISSION: To come together and work together in *hamazori* for the Zarathushti and global communities, celebrating its diversity.

This can be facilitated by bringing members of our worldwide community together at a Congress every four or five years for discourse and dialogue and possible action, on issues of common benefit.

Dialogue and discourse conducted with civility opens our minds, and creates Understanding, out of which emerge Convergence, Consensus and Direction. Consensual actions, resulting from a proper understanding of the issues, are sustainable and beneficial.

Congresses are a fertile ground for sowing the seeds for subsequent action worldwide, remembering that "Dialogue brings minds together and Action brings hearts together".

III. CONGRESS GUIDELINES

The Congress must promote harmony and respect for each other throughout our worldwide community. Diversity of thought is an attribute that promotes richness.

No sectarian or partisan interest may prevail.

A fitting theme appropriate for the period and the prevalent worldwide thought shall be selected around which the Congress shall be structured.

PROGRAMMING

Through the proceedings of the Congress subject matter relevant to all of the guiding institutions; religion and history, education and scholarship, sciences and arts, governance and organization, business and professions, and others, shall be adequately featured.

Opportunities for interest groups to meet and deliberate shall be made available.

Events that promote mingling with each other in appropriate age groups shall be plentiful, e.g. youth, seniors, singles, etc.

Space for vendors, distribution of material and display of books and products shall be made available.

Our world wide Zarathushti community is blessed with many regional and local organizations that serve the interests of communities in specific geographic areas. Opportunities need to be provided to these organizations for dialogue and to address global issues and challenges. The Congress shall provide this opportunity in its programming. A full-day program, along the lines of the ***Coming Together Roundtable***, may be considered during the Congress.

Registration shall include a ***World Community Awards Presentation Ceremony*** at which the following awards shall be presented:

- (a) Outstanding Zarathushti Award
- (b) Excellence in Business or Professions Award (co-sponsored with WZCC).
- (c) Humanitarian Service Award

Refer to the “Guide for World Zoroastrian Community Awards” that provides a methodology for seeking nominations and selection.

Attention shall be given to the initiation of ***legacy projects*** for the benefit of our worldwide Zarathushti community to be further developed and grown upon the conclusion of the Congress. The Congress organizers may encourage the incubation of such a project in the preceding months leading up to the Congress at which time it may be introduced and inaugurated with an appropriate program element. Examples of such projects are the initiation of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) and

the Zoroastrian Women International Network (ZWIN) at the Houston Congress and the Coming Together Roundtable and the Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism (SSZ) at the London Congress.

PROCEEDINGS

Proceedings of the Congress shall be published by the host organization within 6 months, or at most 1 year of the Congress.

A self-regulated process of session chairs submitting their reports online, with essential images, shall be adhered to, lessening the burden on the host organization to make the compilation.

FINANCING

Financing the Congress shall be the responsibility of the entity/group proposing to host the Congress.

Generally, Congresses in most part are financed from the registration fees paid by the participants and donations from sponsors.

Creative ways of financing Congresses have been adopted in the past:

- Registration covers only the main program and one or two meals.
- A potpourri of events is offered at additional cost.
- Sponsors are solicited for specific events, and for advertising in the Congress program brochure.
- Donors are solicited for general expenses.
- Raffles, and other fundraisers are offered.

Seed money. It is suggested that within every Congress budget an amount up to \$5000 shall be set aside to furnish to the entity/group that is selected to hold the succeeding Congress. Initially the seed money may be partially subscribed to by entities/groups that have held previous congresses prior to the initiation of this process namely; BPP, Tehran Anjuman, FEZANA/ZAH, ZTFE and Dubai, in the amount of \$1000 each. It is possible that Dubai may set aside a suitable sum, as available, from the proceeds of the Dubai Congress, lessening the burden on the part of the past hosts to subscribe.

VENUE, BOARDING AND LODGING

The selection of the venue is critical. Preference shall be given to those proposals providing for the orchestration of all of the congress events and boarding and lodging of all registrants in a single complex without the need for commute between several venues.

Boarding and lodging provided shall be reasonable and affordable by registrants from around the world.

Alternately home stays may be offered and organized.

Gastronomy is an important factor for the success of any conference. Wholesome healthy meals reasonably priced ought to be made available at the venue or at a short walking distance. If possible members of the local community may be encouraged to provide home cooked meals at reasonable costs.

IV. PROCEDURE FOR INVITING PROPOSALS (RFP)

To the extent that this Vision and Mission are fulfilled, successive Congresses need to be held in the future. Heretofore entities and locations have been chosen by a rather limited process, to hold the World Zoroastrian Congresses. In order to establish a process with global involvement, a procedure has been developed. What follows is a Procedure for inviting Proposals (RFP) for holding the World Zoroastrian Congress, a Guide for the preparation of such Proposals, and their evaluation.

- 1) A “***Request for Proposal***” (***RFP***) from Zarathushti groups and/or entities in any part of the world shall be invited by the entity/group holding the upcoming Congress at least thirteen months prior to the upcoming Congress. Since the Dubai Congress is to be held in December 2009, proposals shall be invited, and received by the Selection Committee at least thirteen months in advance (November 2008).

(As this will become an additional and totally unexpected burden for Dubia, initially, the Request for Proposals is being made by the group that has subscribed to and assisted in the preparation of this document. Inquiries in regard to the preparation of the proposal may be directed to the subscribers. Completed proposals are to be forwarded to Rohinton M. Rivetna (Rivetna@aol.com) prior to November 30, 2008.)

- 2) ***Selection Committee***. Five prominent Zarathushtis, familiar with the process of hosting large international meetings shall be selected to evaluate the Proposals, and make recommendations. No member of the Selection Committee can belong to any organization proposing to host the Congress.
- 3) ***Results*** of the evaluation shall be declared at least one year in advance of the previous Congress.

V. GUIDE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL

The orchestration of a Congress is an art, a creative process and as such, the filing and submission of a proposal on a prescribed form is to be eschewed. Those organizations submitting their proposals are encouraged to employ their collective ingenuity and creativity in developing a proposal.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Establish an appropriate group and process for preparing your Proposal. Please note that your approach for preparing the Proposal is as important as its content for its evaluation. Members of a local Proposal Development Team may include:

- Members of the local governing committee.
- Local priests
- Youth
- Respected and notable Zarathushtis of the region.
- Business persons and/or WZCC members
- Local experts in organizing conferences
- Academicians
- Members of all sections of the community.

The involvement of all divergent sections of the host community in the preparation of the proposal will be weighted heavily.

THE PROPOSAL

The Proposal shall include the following:

- Proposed Theme for the Congress.
- Duration of the Congress with dates.
- Proposed Programming ideas.
- Plans for satellite meetings (e.g. of WZCC, Coming Together Roundtable, SSZ (Society of Scholars of Zoroastrianism), ZWIN – Zoroastrian Womens' International Network, Mobeds' Councils, Religion Teachers' Workshops, etc.
- Plans for Entertainment. e.g., World Zoroastrian Symphony Orchestra.
- Plans for World Community Awards presentation at a luncheon or dinner.
- Plans for composing theme music and inspirational song lyrics for each Congress.
- Facilities for travel to the destination.
- A selection of possible venues (hotel, campus ...) with their attributes.
- Pre- and post-Congress opportunities for sight-seeing, travel, entertainment.
- A plan for boarding and lodging for the registrants. Catering meals.
- A plan for financing the Congress. Estimated Registration fees.
- A pro forma budget.
- Promotional material regarding venue and program.

- Commitment to implement the suggested process for the selection of the host/venue of the next world Congress.

Include a narrative of how the Proposal has been prepared identifying the Proposal Development Team. Identify a local contact person to respond to inquiries.

PROPOSAL DEADLINE

The completed Proposal with supporting documents shall be submitted to the selection committee at least one year prior to the next Congress.

Response to the RFP with a Proposal will enable the selection committee to evaluate each Proposal and recommend their selection to the organizers of the next congress for their deliberation and announcement.

VI. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The selection committee will evaluate Proposal using the following evaluation criteria.

- Does the Proposal fulfill the Vision and Mission, and the Requirements spelled out for the World Congress.
- Economic viability
- Capacity of the venue and that of the community to undertake the Congress, and all the logistics thereof.
- Distinctive character.
- Ability to inspire and seek cooperation of all sections of the community in *Hamazori*
- Process by which the proposal was developed.
- Support from neighboring Zarathushti organizations in that region.
- Funding strength of the Proposal.

VII. PARTICIPANTS

This document has been inspired by items arising at the “Coming Together Roundtables” 2005 – 2007. It has been enabled with the participation and support of the following persons:

Rohinton Rivetna (North America)

Behram Pastakia (North America)

Firdosh Mehta (North America)

Rustom Kevala (North America)

Minoo Shroff (India)

Meher Bhesania (UAE)

Dorab Mistry (UK)

Paurushasp Jila (UK)

Mehraban Firouzgary or delegate (Iran)

Sam Kerr (Australia)

Tehmus Mistry (New Zealand)

APPENDICES

(Not available at this time)

Appendix 1 – Report of previous Congress

Appendix 2 – Previous Congress Financial Report if available

Appendix 3 – Record and Comparison Chart of previous Congresses.