



**BOOKLET FOR THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
STRATEGIC PLAN**

In caring memory of Cesar Augusto Nunes Viana,  
XIII General President  
Member of the International Structure and Youth team.

## PRESENTATION

In December 2003, a group of members from all over the world were called by the President General to assign to them the development of a booklet for the work of the First International Strategic Plan, for the period 2005 – 2011, for the Ordinary General Assembly of 2005. This would be a rather new , and different task to many in the Society.

The task was carried out by six teams, each one with one person responsible; 34 volunteers having different backgrounds and ages, and representing every continent, were part of them. They have made research work and analysis of the current situation in each of their areas; concluding with the proposal of possible strategies and lines of action.

We have had the Technical Advise of the Accenture Foundation. with Mr. Diego Baeza right at the beginning of the task, and afterwards with Mr. Carlos Vergara. Both of them helping the teams in clearing up doubts in methods and in techniques.

A special mention to the employees and volunteers of the Office of the International General Council in Madrid and in Paris, for their overall support.

As it happens with every project in the Society, our task group was blessed with very close friendship and fraternity, a sign of unity and the essence of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in the world.

We are very pleased to present to you the analysis made in the areas of International Structure and Youth; Economy and Finance; Administration and Communications; Formation, Research, and Spirituality. Also included here are the Indigenous Cultures; and finally the Suggestions for the President General.

We want this booklet to contribute with its analysis, to the development and approval of the strategic lines of action, by the national presidents in our Ordinary Assembly 2005 in Salamanca.

Rigoberto Del Rio Navarro  
Delegate for the 5-Year Plan  
General Council

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## **Working Area: Economy and Finance**

### **Section I: Definition of Working Area**

#### I.1 Definition of Working Area

The finance working area addresses the financial needs of the Society. It attempts to ensure that the plans and programs of the International Council General are well funded. Second, it ensures that the accounting process is transparent and meets international accounting standard. Third, those financial matters are presented, acted upon, and reported in a timely manner.

The Vice President of Finance and the Treasurer are responsible to ensure that this process is in place and the executive committee has approval and oversight authority. The financial process must include all who are cost causers and revenue generators. One function that needs to be established is development (fundraising). This should be a committee reporting to the permanent section.

#### I.2 Description of Current Situation

Significant progress has been made in establishing an accounting system that meets international standards and provides management with information in a timely manner so that good analysis, planning and decision-making can take place.

- Financial statements meet French and international standards.
- The latest financial management software is in place, and data is available for most elements of the system.
- We are prepared to establish a quarterly financial report.
- We have an investment plan in place managed by a banker.
- We don't have a business case process to evaluate and fund new projects.
- We don't have diverse funding sources or adequate reserves to ensure funding of the operating budget.

### Section 11: Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

#### 11.1 Introduction to the SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis was done by asking for input by team members and others with knowledge of the international financial process. Therefore, since the number of responses was small, we should be open to further dialogue and input.

#### 11.2 Strengths

- Poor countries give what they can.
- Our good name provides recognition and credibility to our work.
- We have numerous successful funding programs in our national councils that can be leveraged at the international level.

#### 11.3 Weaknesses

- No specific commitment from national councils to support the annual budget.
- Annual budget is not presented to IEC in sufficient time to gain financial commitment from IEC.
- Annual budget and commentary should be presented in sufficient detail to IEC.
- Funding commitments and expense commitments are not coordinated.
- Once the annual budget is approved, there is no process to address significant changes through the year either from a revenue or expense standpoint.
- The annual accounting audit is not distributed or made available to the IEC.
- A business case process for undertaking and funding new projects is not in place.
- An international development (fundraising) program that integrates IEC programs, where appropriate, is not in place.
- A financial plan does not exist to support the five-year strategic plan.
- A process is needed to account for country currency fluctuations to ensure reliable income sources.
- International lacks a diversified revenue generation program.
- Over the last few years, International financial reserves have been depleted.
- We need to ensure that funds are not hoarded at all levels of the Society.
- A solidarity contributions' system is not in place that is recognized by all Vincentian as being equitable.

- The financial resources to support the CGI reside in a few national councils.
- All National Councils don't contribute to CGI according to their means.
- The Society's individual members have a tradition of giving a great amount of time and talent, but not their personal treasure.
- Accountability from top down provides little or no opportunity for grass roots in-put.
- Financial information does not appear in International Vincenpaul, resulting in general membership has no idea of financial position of Council General.

#### 11.4 Opportunities

- Due to scandals in the Church, Catholics are looking for other channels to assist the poor.
- The Internet has become a powerful tool to distribute a message and raise money.
- Through globalization and the expansion of mass media, communication of needs and solutions to issues affecting the poor can be communicated in a rapid manner.
- Governments, multinationals and foundations are seeking solutions to worldwide problems such as AIDS. They are looking for charitable organizations that can deliver solutions.
- An integrated and expanded development program can provide significant financial resources to the Society.
- The world needs organizations with moral clarity to fulfil the mission of service to the poor.

#### 11.4 Threats

- Other international charitable organizations are better known than the Society.
- Scandals in the Church and charitable organizations can affect the Society.
- Charitable organizations are under increasing scrutiny.
- Investment mismanagement
- Growing competition for funds – many charities “shooting at same duck”
- Financial position of Council General has deteriorated to point where it can seriously jeopardize operation of Society at International level without significant increases in regular revenue.

### **Section III: Vision, Objectives and Strategic Lines of Action**

#### **Section 111.A: Vision**

By October 2010 or sooner the International Council will have a balanced budget funded from multiple sources:

- Solidarity contributions
- Interest income
- Development programs (fundraising)
  - Appeals to members
  - Appeals to Catholics
  - Appeals to general public
  - Grants
  - Governmental
  - Corporate
  - Foundations
  - A variety of giving programs, annuities, etc.
- A 50% annual operating reserve
- A system of managing designated funds' accounts so that excess funds are not accumulated in excess in any one account throughout the entire Society
- A business plan process for undertaking new projects
- An annual budget process that integrates revenue and expense commitments
- A quarterly budget tracking and analysis system that provides for the active participation of representatives of the major funding national councils. The finance committee will recommend budget adjustments and corrective action to the IEC to ensure that the budget remains in balance.
- An annual report that is communicated to our various constituents:
  - o The Church leaders
  - o Members
  - o Government officials
  - o Funding sources

- The report would focus on service, finances, and challenges met and set.
- A development committee that maximizes revenue opportunities and works closely with the finance committee to ensure that the revenue requirements for the Society are met.
  - A five-year strategic plan budget that will support the strategic plan's objectives and timelines. The plan should be reviewed on an annual basis and updated or adjusted as appropriate.
  - A process to incorporate strategic plan projects into the annual budget as costs and revenues occur in the budget year, and approved by the IEC.
  - A cost and revenue tracking system for strategic plan projects
  - Since special projects that help the poor have greater appeal to donors than funding administrative overhead, whenever possible we will appeal for funds for special projects while reserving a contribution to overhead. We will always attempt to have funds contributed as undesignated so that we can maintain flexibility in funding and operations.

### **Section 111.B: Objectives and Strategic Lines of Action**

#### **Objective 1: Perform a zero base budget analysis.**

In order to establish a solid base for building a financial support system, we need to start by analyzing all existing functions to ensure that they are necessary and cost effective.

Lines of action to achieve Objective 1:

Action 1.1: Analyze all existing CGI functions to determine if they are necessary.

Action 1.2: Determine if necessary functions are cost effective.

Action 1.3: Prepare zero base budget.

#### **Objective 2: Ensure the annual budget process integrates revenues and expense commitments from funders and cost centers to support the annual budget.**

This is necessary in order to have a sound financial footing, and to successfully complete our ongoing functions and annual objectives.

Lines of action to achieve Objective 2:

Action 2.1: Determine and agree upon an equitable funding process for national councils.

Action 2.2: Determine the extent to which other income sources such as interest income and development (fundraising) can be incorporated into the budget over the planning cycle.

Action 2.3: Establish timeframes for each stage of the budget process.

Action 2.4: Ensure budget account definitions are clear.

Action 2.5: Ensure that budget rationale is provided for each budget line item.

Action 2.6: Review and confirm the budget approval and commitment process.

#### **Objective 3: Establish a strategic plan and project funding system.**

In order to ensure that new projects are viable and successful, a process is needed to fund projects that are outside the normal activities.

Lines of action to achieve Objective 3:

Action 3.1: Establish a business case process.

Action 3.2: Define funding and approval systems for business cases.

Action 3.3: Establish a process to incorporate revenue, expense, and capital requirements into the annual budget and capital program.

#### **Objective 4: Establish a quarterly budget tracking and analysis process.**

This system is necessary to ensure that the annual budget is on track. If problems arise, they can be addressed and resolved in a timely manner.

Lines of action to achieve Objective 4:

Action 4.1: Review existing budget tracking process.

Action 4.2: Adjust process to ensure that income statement and balance sheet can be reviewed via the Internet.

Action 4.3: Establish a corrective action process.

Objective 5: **Establish an audit review process.**

Lines of action to achieve Objective 5:

Action 5.1: Establish a finance committee to review the annual fiscal audit and provide the appropriate commentary for the International leadership.

Action 5.2: Ensure that audit recommendations are implemented.

Action 5.3: Participate in the selection of independent auditors.

Objective 6: **Establish a development (fundraising) program that enables the CGI to access a variety of revenue sources.**

This plan is necessary in order to increase and diversify our revenue sources.

Lines of action to achieve Objective 6:

Action 6.1: Establish an international development committee.

Action 6.2: Formulate a development plan.

Objective 7: **Establish a process for distributing excess funds.**

This process is needed to ensure that the optimum funds are available to serve the poor.

Lines of action to achieve Objective 7:

Action 7.1: Determine the criteria for excess funds.

Action 7.2: Establish a process for applying for, distributing and monitoring the use of excess funds.

Objective 8: **Develop an annual report (Communications should lead this effort).**

The annual report is necessary in order to inform our various constituents the progress we are making in fulfilling our mission.

Lines of action to achieve Objective 8:

Action 8.1: Provide input to the Communications Committee on financial information.

**Section IV: Details of the Strategic Lines of Action for Selected Objectives**

Objective 1: **Perform a zero base budget analysis.**

Action 1.1: Analyze all existing functions to determine if they are necessary.

- o This should be the joint responsibility of Administration and Financial.  
Because this function provides the foundation for addressing an immediate crisis; that is, annual operating budget deficits.

Action 1.2: Determine if necessary functions are cost effective.

- o Functional analysis will be analyzed and prioritized from a cost-benefit viewpoint.
- o The analysis should be conducted by the joint work group of Administration and Finance.

Action 1.3: Prepare zero base budget.

- o Based on the input of the Administration and Finance work group, a zero base budget will be prepared by Finance.

Objective 2: **Ensure the annual budget process integrates revenue and expense commitments from founders and cost centers to support the annual budget.**

Action 2.1: Determine and agree upon an equitable funding process for National Councils.

- o Develop different options.
- o Test options; do they fund the annual operating budget?
- o Gain concurrence from major funding National Councils. This process should be conducted by the Finance Committee .

Action 2.2: Determine the extent to which other income sources such as interest income and development can be incorporated into the budget over the planning cycle – no timeframe. The International Vice President of Finance should form a committee of people with investment expertise to oversee our investments. The Development Committee should

provide input to the Finance Committee regarding recommendations for development revenue and expense to be placed in the annual budget.

Action 2.3: Establish timeframes for each stage of the budget process.

o Operating budget – 2006

- Budget Development Timetable:
- July 1, 2005 (4 weeks) – Notify cost causers that submission dates for the budget request is August 1, 2005.
- August 1, 2005 (2 weeks) – Cost causers submit preliminary budget requests/estimates.
- September 8, 2005 (5 weeks) – Drafts of preliminary operating budget (discussion and review – President General, VP Finance, Treasurer, Secretary General).
- September 15, 2005 (2 weeks) – Preliminary budget submitted to IEC and Finance Committee for study and review.
- October 1, 2005 (3 weeks) – Input and report from IEC and Finance Committee: questions and/or suggestions.
- October 21, 2005 (2 weeks) – Incorporate final revisions, edit, print.
- November 5, 2005 (4 weeks) – Final proposed budget sent to decision makers (to be determined after discussion with Administration).
- December 5, 2005 – Budget approval due date.

Action 2.4: Ensure budget account definitions are clear.

- o The Finance Committee will review the existing budget account definitions to ensure their adequacy and clarity.

Action 2.5: Ensure that budget rationale is provided for each line item. This will be done by the Finance Committee in conjunction with the preparation of the 2006 budget.

Action 2.6: Review and confirm the budget approval and commitment process.

- o The Finance Committee will work with Administration to establish this process.

Objective 3: **Establish a strategic plan and project funding system.**

Action 3.1: Establish a business case process.

- o The Finance Committee will establish a business case process for the evaluation and approval of any new project

Action 3.2: Define funding approval process for business case.

- o This will be done by a joint team of the Finance Committee and Administration.

Action 3.3: Establish a process to incorporate revenue, expense and capital requirements into the annual budget and capital program.

Objective 4: Establish a quarterly budget tracking and analysis process.

Action 4.1: Review existing budget tracking process. It should be a joint task of Finance and Administration.

Action 4.2: Adjust process to ensure that income statement and balance sheet can be reviewed via the Internet. This is almost in place now.

Action 4.3: Establish a corrective action process.

- o Analyze budget to determine budget shortfalls quarterly.
- o Recommend corrective action where appropriate to correct or minimize shortfalls.

This review would be done by the Finance Committee under the VP of Finance, and begin in January 2006.

Objective 5: **Establish an audit review process.**

Action 5.1: Establish a committee to review the annual fiscal audit and provide the appropriate commentary for the International leadership - the Finance Committee under the VP of Finance. The time frame for the review of fiscal year 2004 audit should be determined by the VP of Finance. This would supplement the independent audit since it does not provide recommendations.

Action 5.2: Ensure that audit recommendations are implemented. Economical and Financial will work with Administration to determine the specific oversight responsibilities.

Action 5.3: Participate in the selection of independent auditors. The VP and the Finance Committee should consider this question annually.

- o Ensure that auditors are qualified and independent.
- o Attempt to secure auditors on a pro bono or reduced rate.

Objective 6: **Establish a development (fundraising) program that enables the CGI to access a variety of revenue sources.**

Action 6.1: Establish a development committee.

- o The President General will ask National presidents to recommend people with development experience to serve as members of the committee. More than one person may be recommended and serve per National Council.
- o The committee will be selected and become operational in soon possible. They will select a chair.
- o Committee should communicate electronically in order to minimize expenses.

Action 6.2: Formulate a development plan. The committee should complete the plan by November 2005.

Objective 7: **Establish a process for distributing excess funds.**

Action 7.1: Determine the criteria for excess funds.

- o Finance should develop this criteria.

Action 7.2: Establish a process for applying for, distributing, and monitoring the use of excess funds.

- o Finance should publish process in July 2005.
- o The Twinning Committee should be responsible for administering the process.
- o The Twinning Committee should receive an annual report from the receiving councils regarding the use of the funds. The reports will also go to the contributing council and the Finance Committee.

Objective 8: **Develop and annual report (Communications should lead this effort).**

Action 8.1: Provide input to the Communications Committee on financial information. This will be a joint effort of Communications and Economical and Financial. Communications will determine when this activity should begin.

## ***Area of Work: Administration and Communications***

### **A. ADMINISTRATION**

#### **Section I: Diagnosis of the Current Situation**

##### **I.1: Definition of the Area of Work**

The area of administration covers the process of planning, organization, management and control of the work being carried out in:

- The CGI
- The Office in Paris
- The Superior Councils

And also the proper use of the available resources and to implement the new mechanisms for increasing them, in order to meet the policies and goals of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

Establishing programs to audit and for an open work of the Society, and to guarantee the operation of the Administration in all the levels of the organization.

##### ***I.2 Description of the Current Situation***

Currently the Second General Vice President for Administration and Communications alternates his functions as Secretary General, and he is also in charge of the Administration of the International Confederation and of the General Secretariat (offices in Paris, Madrid, Rio de Janeiro); overloading the functions makes them to overlook some of their administrative tasks.

Human resources currently available are very efficient, but sometimes is not really valued nor recognized, and there is no balance between the functions and the wages. The group is formed by 7 wage-earners in Paris, 1 in Rio and 3 volunteers, 5 of them perform double functions of administration and communications, due to the great load of work at the Office in Paris, with very few personnel. The larger activities that the secretary performs are the ones dedicated to the communications media (editorial, circulation, reports of the committees, and takes up to 60 % for translation).

The Administrative Functions have focused mainly on the administration of the secretariat (managing the wage-earning personnel, buildings, preparing the Assemblies, taking care of the election of the International President, day-by-day tasks, aggregations and institution, updating the archives)

The lack of material, human and economic resources causes imperfections in the administration, and due to the ignorance of the tasks being performed very few councils collaborate economically.

#### **Section II: Analysis – Weaknesses, Threats, Strengths and Opportunities**

##### **I.2 Weaknesses**

- Insufficient technical, human and financial means for responding to the requests of the countries and
  - The CGI does not have the infrastructure nor the modern equipment to perform its functions
  - The technical equipment must be updated

- There is no full time executive director in Paris
- There is no computer technical service for maintenance and for the development of modern means for internal and external communications.
- Lack of skilled personnel for research and for carrying out projects, and for the service of advocacy for the relations with the international organizations (European Union, ECOSOC, UNESCO, BIT, WHO, etc.)
- There is the need for a person to be in charge of the maintenance and the study of the historical archives of the Society.
- The financial support of the CGI is in charge of very few countries, due to the lack of consciousness and lack of knowledge of the work being performed.
- The office of the CGI has a lot of work and very few personnel.
- Advanced planning for special and major events is not well coordinated – i.e. General Assembly location should be known well in advance, beginning planning one year is not sufficient time for such an event..
- Assemblies of the Society are not open to all Vincentians Assembly 2005), closed meetings should be discouraged.

### **II.3 Threats**

- There is a need for large resources in order to achieve an organizational development and a structural technological shift through all levels of the Society.
- The lack of direct contact with the poor causes that many wage-earners or volunteers do not perceive administrative tasks as charity work.
- The lack of motivation and recognition of the efficient work of the permanent staff can be a cause for desertion
- Indifference of the councils for covering financial needs of the CGI.
- Lack of a good information processing makes Councils to be unaware and not conscious of the importance of the administrative functions, and to collaborate with economical responsibility for an efficient operation.
- Goals and policies in the administration area will not be met if there is no clear perspective for an adequate organizational structure and of the necessary resources.
- The lack of coherent statements makes access difficult for the new volunteers and causes desertion among the younger members
- The lack of skilled personnel in the International SSVP for the technical service of advocacy and for the study and for carrying out projects, causes to not to be able of coordinating help from the International Organizations.
- The Society can deviate itself from its spirit and its original objectives due to the increasing modernization
- The volunteers have to alternate their activities: with their families, at work, and their social ones too, etc.; along with the service for the poor
- Lack of transparency at the administration of the CGI can increase the indifference from the Councils towards financial collaboration.

### **II.4 Strengths**

- The Society has a world structure very well developed and we believe that it is being guided by the Holy Ghost.
- Approval of the New Rule is seen as a positive step in the development of the Society
- The fast response of the CGI when dealing with catastrophes, with the support of Vinpaz
- The archives are being permanently updated (statistics, annual reports, etc.)
- The funds donated by the rich countries to support the activities of the Councils and Conferences of the poor countries
- The international status taken by the Permanent Section has favored a better recognition of the reality of the field of action of the Society, especially thanks to the presence of the ITVP.
- The permanent staff of the Office of the CGI is efficient and performs a great effort in translation
- The financial contribution of some countries cover the needs of the CGI
- Decision-making is done in accordance with the International Structure
- The reports sent to the Councils by the committees make the policies of the CGI transparent.

## II.5 Opportunities

- Increase the resources of the Administration, and establishing a modern administrative office with the necessary resources, and balancing the functions with the wages of the wage-earning personnel.
- Promote activities from the CGI for a better cohesion between the countries
  - get more involved the ITVP's and the Coordinators to decentralize functions of the Office of the CGI
  - Increase resources and the number of Territorial Secretaries to assure an effective service with the ITVP's and the Coordinators.
- Exploit to the maximum the available resources, make a good coordination in the structural organization to accomplish a more efficient management.
- Develop an efficient management through a world structure with transparent policies.

## **Section III: Vision, Objectives and Strategic Lines of Action**

### Section III.A: Vision

In the area of administration it should be defined the field of action, vision, function, persons responsible of the area of Administration of the CGI and the role of the Office of Paris, having access to technical, human and financial resources required for carrying out their functions.

Establish from the CGI instructions focused on the area of administration and to pay attention to the rest of the areas through a proper coordination and internal communication. Get to have a better management from an adequate organizational structure to a worldwide organization. Define from the CGI the administrative job that the ITVP's and the Coordinators must fulfill.

The CGI must seek new financial sources and give the Councils of the poor countries the necessary resources, to assure the performance of efficient administration acting between the internal councils.

The CGI must be the cohesion center between countries and should facilitate access to projects' financing, twinning, etc.

To accomplish an effective Administration, all the Councils must collaborate with responsibility to its financing in order to cover all the needs.

### **Section III.B: Objectives and Strategic Lines**

Objective 1: **Define clearly the mission / vision, the activities and the field of action of the area of administration and the role of the Office in Paris**

Lines of action that makes it possible to achieve Objective 1:

Line of action 1.1: Define the mission / vision, the specific functions of the administration and the role of the office in Paris.

- Establish a Audit Committee of the CGI formed by experienced Vincentians with a solid business background for a revision of the functions and operations of the CGI and suggest an organizational structure (role definition)
- Develop an operational plan for the committee that allows it to adapt to each stage of the project (audit, restructure and Supervision) until 2011.
- The role of the ITVP's and the Coordinators must be defined as a part of the administrative functions of the CGI
- Describe the individual work and the number of required personnel and their skills as well, and also the profiles for each function, and the organizational structure required by the Society
- Define the function of the General Secretariat
- Develop a more coordinated administration, involving the whole international structure

Line of action 1.2: Define the protocol for the CGI and the Staff

- Define the role of the IGP with respect to  
-the distribution of the operations and the functioning of the Office in Paris.
- Representation and monitoring
- Definition and coordination of strategies in the international structure
- Define the role of the Second General Vice-President for the Division of Administration.
- The Staff has to have it very clear the order of things within the structure.
- Definition of positions for the personnel

Line of action 1.3: To outline the functions that must be carried out by the Staff of the CGI, and establish a modern administrative office with the necessary resources.

- Identify the basic functions for the Staff of the CGI
- Description of jobs, positions and fields of action
- Organizational development for the office in Paris
- Elaborate the budget for the Staff of the CGI and present it to the Committee of Finance to be included in the budget of the CGI, in order to provide the required technical, human, physical and financial means.

Line of action 1.4: Develop the organizational restructure in the International Staff

- The audit. Committee must present its report to the IGP and to the IEC 3 months after its appointment.
- This report will define clearly what the role of the Office of the CGI shall be, the quantity and skills of the employees, the necessary resources and the protocol.

**Objective 2: Develop the annual budget of the Office of the CGI and of the committees and commissions**

Line of action 2.1: Define items of the budget the Committee of Finance jointly with the Treasurer and with the Vice-President of Finance.

- The office of the CGI must elaborate a budget for the office of the CGI, for each Committee and Commission, including Vinpaz. These budgets must be submitted to the International Committee of Finance, to be included in the annual Budget of the CGI and present it to the IEC. The Office of the CGI must present this information in accordance with the schedule established for preparing the budget of the Committee of Finance.

Line of action 2.2: Define the needs of the Committees and Commissions to elaborate the budget that must be approved by the Committee of Finance

- The Office of the CGI will monitor the Committees and Commissions and will prepare the quarterly budget and elaborate the reports for the Committee of Finance, including the report of the activities of the Office of the CGI.

**Objective 3: Develop operational plans to measure the reach of the work performed and the mechanisms of follow up and control**

Line of action 3.1 : Define the mechanisms for the follow up of the plan and assure its development

- The audit Committee must monitor the operational plan to audit. The new system of administration through follow up meetings, field studies and reports presentation. Also watch over making the most of the assigned resources, following the schedule until the year 2011
- The Committees and Commissions must do their job and present their reports in the established schedule to have access to the required resources for that. The Office of the CGI must prepare the Committees or Commissions for the expectations and to establish the time required to do their job.

Objective 4: **The CGI must assure an efficient Administration in the Superior Councils of the poor Countries**

Line of action 4.1: To introduce in the Budget an specific fund for that (headquarters, equipment, personnel)

- Implement mechanisms for fund-raising for this item

Line of action 4.2: To assure the setting up in countries where the Society does not exist.

**B. COMMUNICATIONS**

**Section I: Diagnosis of the Current Situation**

**I.1: Definition of the Area of Work**

The area of communications covers all the activities and mechanisms conducted to transmit the needs and to share the resources of the Vincentian Society as an authentic Charity Network, as well as to communicate the messages of the CGI within and through the Society as a whole.

Therefore this area includes the organization and instruments that must ensure efficient internal communication from the CGI to...

- The CGI itself
- The Superior Councils
- The Local Councils
- The Members

and between the members of the organization as well

- International General Council
- Superior Councils
- Local Councils
- Members

The following articles of the Rule express the goals of the area of communications:

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION (Rule of the SSVP article 3.15)

“The vitality of the Society’s network of charity depends on the regular and rapid exchange of news and information. Such communication broadens the members’ horizon and enhances the interest of members in the experiences and challenges of their brothers and sisters throughout the world. The Vincentian response to communication is a willingness to learn and a desire to help”.

A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS (Rule of the SSVP article 7.5)

“The Society helps the poor and disadvantaged speak for themselves. When they cannot, the Society must speak on behalf of those who are ignored”.

## I.2: Description of the Current Situation

At present the communications' function is being carried out on parts by the general international council, the national councils, and the by the local conferences as well, with no planning nor coordination at all that could lead to send in an orderly manner the messages throughout the entire Society, and also to administer efficiently the resources of the Society in this area.

This also goes for the internal and external communications that causes a duplication of channels and of messages non uniform nor ordered with the goals of the SSVP (internal and external as well), people and institutions that does not receive the message of the SSVP, and that are very important for the Society (international institutions, UN, ...), etc...

## **Section II: Analysis – Weaknesses, Threats, Strengths and Opportunities**

### I.1 Weaknesses

- There is no Global Strategy for Communications:
  - There is no global Plan for Marketing and Communications developed by the CGI. They do not have a definite process to settle the levels of dialogue, the work to perform, the channels to use, and the costs of those tasks.
  - There is no coordination between the messages and the efforts being sent by the SSVP out to the world. Each Council is independent when it gets to the point of settling its external communications strategy (if they have one).
  - There is no budget developed prior to the communications' actions that could lead to a planning of expenses, of financing, and that could control deviations and the ones responsible.
  - It is not yet defined the field of action for the CGI, the Councils and Conferences, when it comes to communicating with external entities (governments, institutions, the Church, ...), and this could cause overlapping, interference or lack of awareness of the global significance of the Society.
- The CGI does not count with the necessary resources to carry out properly the goals established in the Rule:
  - Lack of skilled personnel to develop all the communications tasks.
  - The distance between the CGI and the direct contact with the poor, makes it difficult for the new volunteers to develop communications tasks.
  - There is a great need for fresh financial resources in order to undertake new projects and for improving the existing ones.
- For the CGI there is no common language for working, and this makes it very difficult for everybody, it also slows down and increases the cost of decision making, and is a great barrier for internal communications.
- The CGI does not have the ability to change some of the communications policies that exist in the Society.
  - The CGI is an advisory body and has no hierarchical power. It can propose, but not impose.
  - There is a lack of sensibility in the Superior Councils with respect to the significance of the CGI. Some Conferences do not report their activities nor their use of funds to the Councils, because they do not consider it a priority to give the statistical information to the CGI.
  - Most of the members of the Conferences are unaware of the activities of the Communications Department of the CGI, and so are their leaders too, internationally.

- It is difficult to prepare the messages due to a lack of good quality information about the activities of the Society as a whole.
  - Some Conferences and Councils do not report their activities nor their use of funds to the CGI, because they do not consider it a priority to give the statistical information to the CGI.
  - Therefore, the information sent by the CGI to the Councils / Conferences does not have the quality nor the necessary detail in order to take a better care of the needs of the poor, due to the lack of knowledge of the activities, of the experiences and of the resources available in other countries.

## II.2 Threats

- The SSVP does not have the external acknowledgement that it deserves as an organization, given its size and activities:
  - Does not have the image of an internationally renown brand.
  - The SSVP is not recognized by International Organizations like the UN, that involves a loss of access to financial resources.
  - Similar organizations count with a greater level of economic resources, and are better recognized in the world, being able to bring a better service to the poor.
  - In some Conferences the SSVP remains unknown even for the Church and for the Governments. This causes that sometimes the creation of new conferences is not accepted because they are not recognized as large charity organizations.
- Difficult access to communications tools.
  - In poorer countries there are Conferences that does not have modern means of communications.
  - Lack of human resources to cover certain areas.
  - Lack of financial resources and of physical space (most of the Conferences do not have a permanent place to meet).
  - Lack of formation of Councils and Conferences can make it harder to access to the communications' channels used by the CGI.

## II.3 Strengths

- The Holy Spirit is always present in our society enlightening our work.
- Action against poverty in the Conferences gives to the Society a very powerful message to communicate. There are contents very rich to transmit within the Society.
- Communication from CGI towards the Superior Councils is generally fair.
- The culture of brotherhood and the charisma of the Society makes that:
  - Countries exist within the Society that have resources and that they share them with the poorer nations through the twinnings and special donations
  - The SSVP has very few wage-earning personnel. Most of the work is done by volunteers.
  - When it comes down to handle external communications, there exists a more frequent corporate culture that brings efficiency to the communications activities.

## II.4 Opportunities

- Making the most by using efficiently the resources that the Society has, through a coordinated strategy and a more efficient management.
- Deliver the experiences and needs, and to canalize resources to all the Conferences.
- Deliver to the whole society the message of Christ to the poor.
- There exists a great potential for collaborating with other entities and International Organizations in fund-raising and gathering of goods.
- There are great opportunities to expand even more the Charity Network by communicating what the SSVP is and its activities.
- Internet technology advancing at rapid rate – SSVP must take advantage of this trend with high quality, high tech interactive Web Page – i.e. we do not ask for financial support on our Web site.

## **Section III: Vision, Objectives and Strategic Lines of Action**

### **Section III.A: Vision**

**The vision of the area is to serve as the base for the development of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul as a true Charity Network,**

1. Communicating globally the needs of our brothers worldwide, to the Councils and to the society in general (catholics, governments, citizens)
2. Sharing existing resources with those who need them.
2. Facilitating the access to projects' financing (external fund-raising, twinings,).
3. Sharing the experiences that will allow a better formation for the members, and a better service for the poor.

For that purpose, **the vision of the area of communications with respect to the CGI can be defined as establishing the:**

1. **CGI as a reference for solving the problems of the Society**, channeling the needs of the Councils and leading the solutions to those needs in a coordinated manner.
2. **CGI as a facilitator of the communications within the Society**, providing it with the mechanisms and processes that will allow the Vincentians to share their needs, resources and experiences.
3. CGI as **an integrator of the information of the Society and responsible for the planning and coordination of the external communications** to truly be the voice for the voiceless in front of the different levels of society ( the Church, international institutions, governments, regional and local, citizens, ...).

### **Section III.B: Objectives and Strategic Lines**

**Objective 1: Turn the CGI in an archetype for the whole of the Councils and of the Conferences in the way of solving their problems**

Line of action 1.1: Name those in charge of the different functions with full time dedication, providing the tools, competences and executive authority for solving the problems of the Councils and Conferences in their own fields.

Line of action 1.2: Define processes and channels in order for the Councils and Conferences to have direct and immediate access to those in charge.

Line of action 1.3: Communicate and form the Society in the contents and competences of the functions of the CGI, and of the proceedings and channels to access them.

**Objective 2: Facilitate the internal communication of the Society, providing the mechanisms and processes that will allow Vincentians to share their needs, resources and experiences**

Line of action 2.1: Define processes and tools that will assure a flow of information and resources through the Society in accordance with the requirements defined by the different Areas (i.e. Data Base for sharing the formation resources, ...).

Line of action 2.2: To assure that the Councils and the Conferences have the technology and the formation that will allow them to use efficiently the mechanisms and the tools previously mentioned.

Line of action 2.3: Define and approve the necessary budget, and also the sources for financing it, that will allow to carry out successfully all the lines of action mentioned before.

**Objective 3: To assure the quality and availability of the information about the activities of the SSVP as a whole by the CGI**

Line of action 3.1: Define the information and its uniform structure that the CGI requires for responding to the needs for external and internal communication (formation, twinnings, research, image, ...).

Line of action 3.2: Define processes, channels and tools for the Councils to be able to send the required information on time, and in the form and with the structure requested by the CGI.

Line of action 3.3.: To involve the Conferences and assure their commitment in sending the information to the CGI, and forming them in the use of the new channels and the new communication processes.

**Objective 4: To establish the SSVP as the voice of the poor in front of the different levels of the society (the Church, diocese, international institutions, governments, regional and local, citizens, ...), through the planning and coordination of the external communications.**

Line of action 4.1: Define the Mission / Vision of the Department of Communications of the CGI

Line of action 4.2: Define the field of action of the CGI with respect to the External Communications of the Society, and of each Council as well.

Line of action 4.3: Define the Internal Organizational Structure necessary for the response to the new needs of the External Communications.

Line of action 4.4: Prepare the SSVP for its access to the International Organizations.

Line of action 4.5: Establish the necessary relations at the Society global levels, in order to obtain fresh funds and resources from the international institutions.

Line of action 4.6: Carry out an Annual Marketing Plan for the whole Society

- Annually define the messages, contents and structure of the information, to be coherent with the objectives of communications of the Rule
- To choose the more adequate channels of Communications for undertaking the objectives of the Rule
- Define the coordinated communications strategy, distributing activities to be carried out through the different levels of the organization
- Develop operative plans and the reach of their tasks, the ones in charge of, and the mechanisms for follow-up and control.
- Define the annual budget that will allow to accomplish the objectives of external communications.
- Establish the mechanisms for financing the actions of communications to be developed by the CGI.

## **Working Area: International Structure and Youth**

### **Section I: Definition of Working Area**

#### I.1: Definition of Working Area

This working area will include the International Structure and Youth. It will examine the strengths and weaknesses of the current situation and propose directions and goals for each. The two sections will be presented separately as they are two important areas and not closely related. There are some areas of "Structure" that overlap other sections, namely Administration and Finances. Wherever possible, overlapping items will be covered in the area believed to be most suitable. The section dealing with "Structure" will analysis the decision making process at the President General level as well as to make recommendations for future administrations. The section dealing with youth will look at "how we get youth to join, and stay in the Society as well as to suggest ways to develop youth participation in the Society and how to place Youth in the forefront of the Society with the goal of placing them in senior positions of the Society to encourage and promote them as the future leaders of the Society.

#### 1.2 Description of Current Situation - Youth

The present situation of Youth and their participation within our Society is seriously lacking in many areas. This is particularly the case in the "Developed" world. At present the (International) Society is paying little service to attracting youth, and for the most part when they (young adults) attend meetings they are seen but not heard. There are many members (both in quantity and percentage) in certain countries (third world for example) but a very low number in others (have countries). The International Youth delegate position has very little impact at any international meetings. Only a few countries have a National Youth delegate on their Boards and the International Youth Delegate, as well as the Regional Youth delegate have little or no resources to carry out any meaningful work or travel. A motion to include a Youth Delegate on all National/Superior Councils placed in the Rule was defeated in Rome and did not make it into the Rule which goes to show the lack of urgency for this issue by the majority of voting delegates at the Council General. Questions must be raised as to why young people are not joining the Society, as well as why they do not stay once they have joined. We must ask ourselves what message are young people hearing from the Society? What obstacles are placed in front of young people in the Society?

#### I.2 A Description of Current Situation - Structure

The current International Structure is a pyramid originating with the International President General (an elected position). This structure is shown on the OZANET site (Organization – Coordinating Committee). From this origin (President General) the remainder of the Board (or Cabinet) is appointed as follows:

#### **The Board of the Council General**

International President General – Jose Ramón Diaz Torremocha

International General Vice-President – Joe Mueller (USA)

Secretary General – Yves Verre – (France)

Treasures General – Ian McTurk (Scotland)

International Spiritual Advisor – P. Jaime Corera C.M (Spain)

International Youth Delegate – Rita Oliva (Italia)

This group Constitutes "the Board" (International Rule Articles 3.16.1, .2, .3

This group is charged with Advising and counselling the President General and must be consulted by the President General at least three times a year. It should be noted however that this is not a decision making body as it does not vote on policies or other motions, but "Advises" the President.

The following positions are also part of the Board (article 3.18) (I think).

Second VP- Administration Yves Verre (France)

Second VP Formation, History Huascar N. de Abreu (Brazil)

Second VP Finance Wenceslas de Renesse (Belgium)

Second VP International Structure Michael Theo (Singapore)

Advisor to the President General - Jean-Luc Boccon-Gibod (France)

This group would constitute the Board. All of these people are appointed by the President General, who presides over the Board.

Article 3.21 of the Rule states that the Treasurer General establishes the Budget for the Administration of the Council General, which is approved by the "Permanent Section in its capacity as the Governing Board, before being presented at the General Assembly, or in years when there is no General Assembly to the International Executive Committee who will be responsible for approving the Budget.

#### Service Structure

The remaining members of the "Service Structure" are appointed by the President General and include – international Territorial Vice-presidents and Area Coordinators. The ITVP's are responsible for a large geographical area and shall support, advise, protect, help and coordinate the Society. The Coordinators assist the ITVP reporting to him/her on smaller geographical areas.

#### **Permanent Section/Governing Board**

A permanent Section shall be established at the head office of the General Council of the Confederation; it shall be presided over by the President General: Its mission is to closely supervise and monitor the activity of the Society around the world, helping the President General to achieve a better international service for members and the poor. The Permanent Section, in its capacity as the Governing Board, approves the income and expenses in the Budget before being presented to the general Assembly or the IEC during years when there is no Assembly. The Permanent Section shall specifically monitor resolutions adopted at the last Assembly meeting of the Council General or the International Executive Committee, as well as their degree of implementation in the different Superior, Assimilated or Associated Councils and by the Council General itself whenever appropriate.

Membership on the Permanent Section includes the Board Members of the Council General, the ITVP's and the Correspondents.

#### **The International Executive Committee**

*The International Executive Committee shall be responsible for coordinating the Society's international strategy in the interim periods between Council General Assemblies. It shall assist and advise the President General in the task of supervising all the Conferences and Councils.....* There is a missed translation in the English version of the Rule from the French version, which clearly states that the President General presides over this Committee.

Members of the IEC include the President General, Vice President General, Secretary General, Treasurer General, and other Vice-President Generals (or most of the Board). In addition "legal" members shall include Presidents of Superior or Assimilated Councils with more than 1000 Conferences. In addition the President General shall appoint five members from Councils with less than 1000 Conferences from around the world. For the most part, the IEC members of the IEC are not appointed by the President General but are there because of their membership (1000+ Conferences), making this committee uniquely independent and a good body to be charged with the approval of the Budget .

#### **Territorial Vice-Presidents and Coordinators.**

The present structure of Territorial Vice-presidents and Coordinators is a good one, but presently the TVP's have very little budgets or resources to visit with the members within their jurisdictions which is severely hampering their effectiveness.

## **Section II: Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**

### **II.1 Introduction to the SWOT analysis**

The SWOT analysis has been carried out from personal observations as well as in consultation with, and solicited input from a number of senior Vincentians from around the world. Much of the work carried out by the present "Structure" is not visible or apparent to the average member, the results and communicated decisions however are. As well the participation (or lack thereof) is more apparent to the average Vincentian at large, and even more so the younger members of the Society. While the Society was started by Youth and continually promotes that it is open to Youth, few young members are seen at major National or International gatherings.

## II.2 Strengths

The Society is a well respected organization around the world

The Society receives support from Church hierarchy

The Society has a growing membership in third world countries

The Society has just produced a new International Rule

The Society has a history of good leadership at all levels of the Society.

The Society maintains a good professional staff at International Office in Paris

The Society is a global organization, and coast-to-coast nationally in many countries.

## II.3 Weaknesses

The present Organizational Structure of the International Council General is not understood by the member countries.

General Presidency could be an inordinate amount of control of organization and its major decisions over the Society, in agreement to the new rule.

Lack of funding at the Council General is severely hampering the effectiveness of the regional representatives (Territorial Vice-presidents and Coordinators) and has also resulted in the cancellation of important territorial meetings like the IBERO Americano 2004 and Oceania.

There is a low participation of youth in many areas- age of membership should be going down, not up.

Even though a majority of Society membership is women, there is a low participation of women at the International Level –women are not encouraged to run for senior offices.

The present set-up of the Permanent Section will be difficult to make work – will be expensive, requiring much travel for members.. This set-up may lengthen an already lengthy delay in receiving Aggregations approvals etc.

Involvement of Youth at International and National Councils very low and little effort being expended by Council General to improve situation..

Greying population in Western world and European Church leading to dwindling membership in Society.

## II.4 Opportunities

Tremendous growth and potential for growth in membership in Central and South America and Africa.

World Youth Days provide concentration of young people in one place – SSVP should take advantage of situation with manned displays.

The Society could have its own International Youth Day.

Growing poverty in world – Growth area for Society.

Preparation and presentation of a Strategic Plan will offer a clear pathway for the Society for the next administration. Acceptance of the Plan by the membership will result in long term support of the Council General.

#### II.4 Threats

Shrinking population growth in first world and booming population growth in third world will lead to fewer people supporting more people.

Aging Catholic population reflected in aging membership of the Society, Catholic Churches are being closed around the world, now we are seeing the closure of Conferences as well..

Increasing costs, slow growth in revenues resulting in budget deficits.

Without rapid growth in young members in developed countries, extinction of Society is a possibility in some countries.

Youth not attending Church on a regular bases – how do we attract them ?.

Groups like Sun Youth (Canada) and YMV are growing rapidly as an alternative to SSVP. Members can participate immediately as “hands on” members. This is very attractive to youth.

Changing technology drastically affecting development in third world – resulting in more poor requiring assistance – i.e. large industrial farms in Mexico displacing small family farmers.

Lack of recruitment and plan to place young people in positions of responsibility is affecting Society and its ability to attract young people.

### **Section III: Vision, Objectives and Strategic Lines of Action**

#### Section III.A: Vision - Youth

The development of the Society over the next six years should focus on the re-integration of youth (young adults) into the membership as well as communicating the vision for the development of the Society to the broader membership. Young members of the Society must be given additional responsibility and visibility which will result in a revitalized and dynamic Society. To achieve this development of the international Society it will be necessary to involve the National/Superior Councils and members of the Board and Permanent Section in this vision of attracting and involving young adults. Young adult must be given encouragement, support and guidance from senior members; as well they should be encouraged to take on responsibilities and senior positions at the national and international levels of the Society. All Superior/National Council Presidents should be encouraged to include the development of youth participation as a national priority of the Society in their countries. The Council General should examine the existing “best practices” in countries like those in Central and South America to see how they are attracting and keeping young adult members. The Council General Youth Delegate should be appointed to lead an “International Youth Committee” with continental representation (these members could be recommended by the International Territorial Vice-Presidents). This Committee/Commission should be charged with developing an International Youth Development Manual for use throughout the world and guiding the drive to attract young adult members. . The International Youth Committee should also be charged with organizing an “International Vincentian Youth Gathering” within three years. The cost of this meeting will have to be determined and accounted for in the International Council budget.

**Objective 1: To increase the number of young adults in the Society and in senior management positions within the Society.**

It is important that the Society find and convince young adults to join the Society over the next few years. These young adults must be trained and be given responsible positions within the Society. There are also young adults in the Society at this time who are available and capable of taking on added responsibility but are not being utilized. These young people, along with the new members attracted to the Society must be given the opportunities to take active roles in the development and administration of the Society. It is imperative that all Superior/National Councils involve young adults in their Boards of Directors in a meaningful and productive manner, leading to a constant pool of young adults for service in the Council General. Young adults in visible positions in the Society will lead to attracting larger numbers of young adults to the Society world wide – the ultimate goal.

Lines of action to achieve Objective 1:

Action 1.1: Establish International Youth Committee/Commission, chaired by International Youth Delegate with Continental representation.

Action 1.2: Youth Committee to develop International Youth Development Manual within two years.

Action 1.3: Youth Committee to develop a plan to conduct an International Vincentian Youth Meeting and present to the President General within a year.

Action 1.4: Council General/President General to develop goals for young adult participation at the International level from years 2005 – 2010.

Action 1.5: President General/Council General to encourage Superior/National Council Presidents to meet participation Council General youth participation goals at their national levels.

Section III B: Vision – International Structure

There is a perceived lack of transparency and accountability on behalf of individuals and Councils not directly involved in the highest levels of the Society (Board, Cabinet). Improving this situation will require improved communication, transparency and accountability on behalf of the Council General and President General. The present Council General requires additional and ongoing funding to achieve its goals, also as a result of increased expenditures.

The membership will respond to this requirement for increased funding and support if they feel that they are part of the decision making process and well informed by the Council General. The implementation of any objectives and lines of action will also require the involvement and commitment of the permanent staff (Administration). The staff will require the necessary resources and training to accomplish the requirements of the Council General. The international Structure in the regions also must be given the resources to carry out their mandate as International Territorial Vice-presidents and Coordinators as well as to encourage (and reestablish) regional meetings like the IBERO Americano and Oceanic Meetings. The visibility and transparency of the Council General and President General will be greatly enhanced by the establishment and presentation of a clear and open "Decision" making process for the Council General – i.e. how are major decisions made by the President General and Council General, decisions like the "Tiber Project" Model Training Center in Rome and the location of the International Office? How are the views and opinions of the members of the IEC, as well as the member countries integrated into the decision?

**Objective 1: To Strengthen the Structure of the IEC.**

The membership of the IEC represents 85% of the members and Conferences world wide. This committee is uniquely positioned to be an effective tool for the input of the membership into the decision making process of the International Council. To be this effective tool, the IEC must be an established "Standing Committee" with structure that will allow the membership to be informed and input their views on International matters.

Lines of action to achieve Objective 1:

Action 1.1: Council General to establish clear guidelines for the presentation of Budget information and Meeting Agendas to the Secretary of the IEC for circulation to IEC Members to allow reasonable time for discussion prior to meetings of the IEC.

**Objective 2: Council General to provide Clear Decision-Making Process for Decisions made at the International Level.**

There are many decisions that are made, and which must be made at the International Council level on a regular base. Only a few of these decisions would impact on the international membership of the Society. It is important that the member countries be aware of the decisions being made by the Council General and President General and have enough information and opportunities to input into the decision making process to feel part of the international structure. The strengthening of the IEC will allow for quick dissemination of information to the IEC membership and response to the Council General/President General. The IEC and President General must establish clear "Decision-making models" acceptable to the members of the IEC. This Decision-making processes would be used when making decisions that will impact on the International membership, examples of such decisions would be the proposed move to Rome (Tiber Project) and the location of the Paris office. The models would also cover decisions made by the Permanent Section. A quorum should be established for meetings of the Permanent Section – i.e. how many members of the Permanent Section must be present to qualify the gathering as a meeting? There should be a clear definition of what type of decisions are being made by the International Confederation as well as define who are voting members of the Confederation.

Lines of action to achieve Objective 2 – International Structure:

Action 2.1: Establish Organization Chart that accurately reflects the International Structure as defined in the International Rule of the Society.

Action 2.2: Establish Decision-making process for the Permanent Section including what constitutes a quorum for meetings of the Permanent Section as well as the frequency of meetings required per year.

Action 2.3: Establish and present Decision-making models for actions taken by the IEC/President General outlining the steps and timing of information transfer and the required response time to and from the IEC.

Action 2.4: Present Decision-making model to be used by the Confederation including roles and responsibilities of members, criteria for voting members and frequency of meetings of the Confederation and types of decisions that must be referred to the Confederation.

**Section IV: Details of the Strategic Lines of Action for Selected Objectives**

**Objective 1 - Youth: To increase the number of young adults in the Society and in senior management positions within the Society.**

Action 1.1: Establish International Youth Committee/Commission, chaired by International Youth Delegate with Continental representation.

- Committee to be established in 2005
- Members to be identified with input from Territorial Vice-presidents.
- Committee to be instructed to meet annually

Action 1.2: Youth Committee to develop International Youth Development Manual within two years.

- Council General Vice-president to be assigned to help coordinate and direct work.
- First meeting to establish time lines for work progress.
- Necessary funds to be identified in Council General Budget for years 2005/06.

Action 1.3: Youth Committee to develop a plan to conduct an International Vincentian Youth Meeting and present to the President General within a year.

- Identify costs of proposed meeting and number of participants.
- Identify possible locations.
- Contact National/Superior Councils to get approval of possible locations.
- Identify theme for meeting.
- Identify Key-note speakers.

Action 1.4 Council General/President General to develop goals for young adult participation at the International level from years 2005 – 2010.

- Council General/President General to instruct National/Superior Councils to place Youth Development as a priority item for their Councils.
- Council General to place Youth Development item in International Budget.

Action 1.5: President General/Council General to encourage Superior/National Council Presidents to meet Council General youth participation goals at their national levels.

- Important milestones - annual youth members in Council General

- Person responsible for this line of action: President General
- Person responsible for each task: International Youth Commission Chairman.

Objective 1 International Structure: **To Strengthen the Structure of the IEC**

Action 1.1 - Council General to establish clear guidelines for the presentation of Budget information and Meeting Agendas for circulation to IEC Members to allow reasonable time for discussion prior to meetings of the IEC.

- Provide draft Budget to Members of IEC in ample time prior to meeting for approval of Budget.

Objective 2 International Structure: **Council General to provide Clear Decision-Making Process for Decisions made at the International Level.**

- Action 2.1: Establish Organization Chart that accurately reflects the International Structure as defined in the International Rule of the Society.
- Action 2.2: Establish Decision-making process for the Permanent Section including what constitutes a quorum for meetings of the Permanent Section as well as the frequency of meetings required per year.
- Action 2.3: Establish and present Decision-making models for actions taken by the IEC/President General outlining the steps and timing of information transfer and the required response time to and from the IEC.
  - Establish Decision-making Model for the Council General when dealing with international issues
  - Establish Decision-making models for issues being dealt with by the President General.
- Action 2.4: Present Decision-making model to be used by the Confederation including roles and responsibilities of members, criteria for voting members and frequency of meetings of the Confederation and types of decisions that must be referred to the Confederation.

## **Working Area: TRAINING, RESEARCH AND SPIRITUALITY**

### **A. TRAINING**

#### **Section I: Definition of Working Area**

##### I.1: Definition of Working Area

Value of an Organization will increase by enhancing skills of its members and helping leaders to be better decision makers. The knowledge available with the organization and abilities of leaders brings together a diversity of perspectives and insights, which can take our Society to more beautiful spheres of Vincentian life.

The existing systems of training shall not be ignored or derailed while modifying them to meet the challenges of time and need. ( See Article 1.6 of the Rule).  
New areas, methods and responsibilities of training work have to be identified.

Council General will be more effective in Parental role in initiating and coordinating integrated training programmes in different subjects and activities in various parts of the world. ( See Article 3.12 of the Rule). It is to be decided what formation that the Society, through its General Council, should provide to those Councils (a majority in the world), which do not have the possibility of setting up and offering it to the fellow members of their countries.

##### I.2: Description of Current Situation

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH & INTERNATIONAL FORMATION under Second General Vice-President is doing remarkable work in this subject area and it is continuously monitored and supported by Council General. Training is an integral part of internal administration in many countries and agencies of Council General. Council General is in the process of assessing the possibility of establishing a model-training centre for offering quality training to its various branches. The under developed and developing countries have multiple hurdles to make the training more productive.

Accountability, Transparency, Democratic functioning and Principle of subsidiarity ( See Article 3.9 and 3.10 of the Rule) are yet to be reached in all levels of activities, through training. Staff, Office bearers, and Persons in special commissions also needs guaranteed International training authenticated and monitored by Council General. Training for addressing the issues related to Indigenous people is not sufficiently developed. Training programs for Internet Access, Electronic communication and Public Relations activity are also not sufficiently provided.

#### **Section II: Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**

##### II.1: Introduction to the SWOT analysis

Analysis of current view situation helped to identify the capabilities and challenges in offering quality training. General and specialized Vincentian areas of activities which require training have examined in different perspectives. Present system of training reviewed and requirements identified.

##### II.2: Strengths

- Experienced and committed Members as potential trainers.
- Rules and Manuals currently available are recently renewed and supportive to change.
- Availability of independent or Church owned training facilities/stations/ Institutions.
- Hierarchical system of administration
- Readiness to adapt new technologies in communication and training
- Good discipline among members
- Existing training systems/ materials in various places
- Possibility for Out- sourcing of expertise

### II.3: Weaknesses

- Non- availability of infrastructure for training in majority area.
- Lack of sufficient and modern education among members
- Reluctance for training among members as this is a voluntary service
- Lack of efficient and experienced trainers
- Lack of professionally prepared training materials and support data.
- Lack of enough fund and time
- Remote and rural nature of work areas
- Lack of professional approach to Training
- Absence of common language
- Aging membership

### II.4: Opportunities

- Readiness of new members to get informed
- Rapid improvement in record maintenances
- Improvement in Technological advancement and connectivity
- Availability of translation services.
- Common training manual can be universally used as basic document
- News letters/bulletins/websites published/maintained by various councils can be used as training equipment.
- Training can be exclusively sponsored by MNC's or Funding agencies

### II.5: Threats

- Rejection of idea of training by members
- Non-allotment or non availability of funds
- Intrusion of wrong or damaging information
- Lack on interest by office bearers
- Failure in communication and transfer of materials
- Decline in youth membership
- Increase in cost.
- Absence of proper feed back.

## Section III: Vision, Objectives and Strategic Lines of Action

### Section III. A: Vision

Establish Training as International priority function and responsibility of Council General and a powerful tool for the Council General in improving the quality of Society and achieving the uniformity in its character, universally. Access to quality training shall be guaranteed to all, throughout organization.

### Section III.B: Objectives and Strategic Lines of Action

#### Objective 1: **To ensure availability of necessary Training resources**

Lines of action to achieve Objective 1:

Action 1.1: Constitute a core team of experts including experienced members, Academicians and Trainers to work together in identifying the requirements and monitoring the training work.

Action 1.2: Prepare Three types of model training manual for universal applications by the above team.

- a) Fundamental subjects - for new members
- b) Detailed and specified subjects- for new Office bearers and staff
- c) In depth study - for periodical Refresher courses/ Re-training.

**Objective 2: To Solicit and Review existing training programs of various "Have" countries/ National/superior Councils.**

Council General can make use of good training materials and methods and also ensure that training conducted by various councils or agencies are in tune with the Rules of the Society.

Lines of action to achieve Objective 2:

Action 2.1: Solicit the texts, manuals and reports of training conducted by various Councils or Agencies.

Action 2.2: Review the same by a team of experts.

Action 2.3: Report the review done by the team to Council General.

**Objective 3: To Prepare "generic" training programs for "have-not" countries.**

It may be necessary to help the developing and under developed countries in preparing training program.

Lines of action to achieve Objective 3:

Action 3.1: Support in the formation of training team in every superior /National council

Action 3.2: Provide prepared model training manual and enable each council to prepare their own training manual as per their needs.

Action 3.3: Encourage/assist the needy Superior /National Councils to conduct training with the active support of team of Experts as per Action 1.1 and offer Periodical review and support to lower level councils

Action 3.4: Help to establish good library in all levels, if possible Virtual library also

**Objective 4: To conduct direct training programmes by Council General**

Lines of action to achieve Objective 4:

Action 4.1: Conduct in-house workshops and Identify good line of faculty/trainers from various parts of the world for preparing, publishing, reviewing and periodically upgrading training manuals, translating training programs and also for offering quality training in the International level for different geographical areas and Special commissions and also to make them available for superior councils as resource persons.

Action 4.2: Conduct high quality training for the Council General staff, Permanent section members, IEC members by using external expertise also.

Action 4.3: Conduct Specific training to the members delegated for specific works/commissions.

Action 4.4: Conduct one/two day annual training programs for National/ Superior Council Presidents at Territorial level.

Action 4.5: Conduct training camps/workshops for selected members in five continents under the leadership of Territorial Vice-Presidents at the expense of Council General.

Action 4.6 : Conduct or sponsor specific training to office bearers of superior councils who have to deal with the Aboriginal ( Indigenous) cultures in conferences.

Action 4.6.1 : Conduct or sponsor specific training programmes for selected members from the Indigenous cultures for enabling them to integrate more effectively with the Society in various subjects and procedures by allowing them to protect their own originality.

## Section IV: Details of the Strategic Lines of Action for Selected Objectives

### Objective 1: **To ensure availability of necessary Training resources**

Action 1.1: Constitute a core team of experts

Action 1.2: Prepare Three types of model training manual

### Objective 2: **To Solicit and Review existing training programs**

### Objective 3: **To Prepare "generic" training programs for "have-not" countries.**

### Objective 4: **To conduct direct training programmes by CGI**

Action 4.1: Conduct in-house workshop and Identify good line of faculty/trainers

Important milestones – Identification of members (January, 2006)

Constitution of teams (April, 2006)

Preparation of model training manuals (January, 2007)

Conducting direct training programmes by CGI (2006-08)

Person responsible for this line of action: Second General Vice President of II Division and President of Commission for Historical research and International Formation

## B. RESEARCH

### Section I: Definition of Working Area

#### I.1: Definition of Working Area

Increased awareness on research and evaluation is essential for building and testing knowledge in different spheres of Society. Collecting, scrutinizing, documenting and evaluating all available information and data is a necessity for the growth of a matured organization. A system has to be developed for these works and thereby we can establish a database open for multiple purposes and uses. Research in specified areas supported by quality database can give mutually enriching results and feedbacks. And it is also necessary to identify to what extent the historical research is necessary in the Conferences. Study on internal and external issues that may probably affect the society in future can help us to take pre-emptive measures for protecting the fundamental interests of Society.

#### I.2: Description of Current Situation

Till date Society carried out lot of work in this area and we have substantial information and data about our history and present situations. Studies done by Individual persons and various Commissions independently and also with the support of Council General gave more insights and outputs. But initiating further research and capitalizing the available data which is not systematically identified and documented yet is delayed because of financial and time constraints. Steps have to be taken to fully translate the results of completed study into action.

### Section II: Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

#### II.1: Introduction to the SWOT analysis

Examination of published text and data available in bookshelves and websites gives us a bright picture. The persons who got involved in study and research about society and its founders provided their actual experiences. Evaluation of merits and demerits in current situation distinguishes the future probabilities.

#### II.2: Strengths

- Established in a civilized society by educated persons
- Rich history in the modern era
- Availability of Proper and accessible records and data
- Continuity in office and administration
- Systems are available to publish/document/ utilize the research results for future growth

### II.3: Weaknesses

- Lack of credible information and data
- Non availability of space and system for data analysis and documentation
- Non- availability of proper know-how
- Lack of experience among members
- Benefits of research is not well understood
- Lack of time and enough funds
- Difficulty for interested persons in accessing data and information.

### II.4: Opportunities

- Need of proper documentation of history in most segments
- Feel for finding out new avenues of work
- Demand for new methods of service
- Availability of Technologically advanced methodologies
- Good connectivity among members to enable sharing of results.
- The research can be get sponsored by MNC's or Funding agencies
- Hierarchical/two way communication system of organization is helpful for all research methodologies.

### II.5: Threats

- Low priority for the research
- Non-allotment or non availability of funds
- Lack on interest by office bearers
- Misinterpretation of research results
- Wrong and misleading information
- Unreasonable delay in research work.

## Section III: Vision, Objectives and Strategic Lines of Action

### Section III. A: Vision

Rediscover our history, define present and plan for the future, in a systematic and scientific manner by encouraging study on the probable areas of interest in future. Thereby, help Society to periodically renew and adapt itself to the changing conditions of the world ( See Article 1.6 and 7.3 of the Rule).

### Section III.B: Objectives and Strategic Lines of Action

**Objective 1: To formulate a Policy on Research and initiate research in the Subjects of interest for the Society and propose Guidelines for research in the lower levels and provide technical assistance**

Lines of action to achieve Objective 1:

Action 1.1: Constitute a core team of experts including experienced members, Research fellows and technical experts to work together in identifying the requirements and monitoring the research work.

Action 1.2: Consolidate and capitalize all data presently available and get it scrutinised by an expert team and document it systematically.

Action 1.3: Take appropriate steps for preserving and maintaining the documents, materials and data that have historical significance.

Action 1.4: Establish a research/reference centre with library and electronic database.

Action 1.5: Initiate research in the subjects like Rules & regulations of Society, Activities & Work methodology, Spirituality, Impacts of work and Relations with Church and civil society in the periods of Historical (Inception to till date), Current (Present period) and Future (Possibilities based on Probability) for identifying new and relevant information.

Action 1.6: Propose Guidelines for research in the lower levels and provide technical assistance

**Objective 2: To encourage and assist members and non-members in the Methodology for research like conducting Survey (direct & indirect), instituting Archives (Maintenance & Study), Documentation (Facts, Figures & Statistics) and Publication of papers (Research results)**

Lines of action to achieve Objective 2:

Action 2.1: Encourage interested persons both members and academicians to do research in the fields in which society have interests.

Action 2.2: Publish the results and thesis of study after reviewing it by expert team.

Action 2.3: Enter into agreement with Universities and similar organizations to carry out research in the mutually interested fields.

**Objective 3: Identify and document the data and information, which may be required by the Society or church or public for extra ordinary or emergency works.**

Lines of action to achieve Objective 3:

Action 3.1: Continuously solicit, record, aggregate, provide and update information and knowledge and thereby create an international database of existing and future ordinary and special Works.

Action 3.2: Identify possible collaborators to foster partnerships with other organizations in addressing the issues affecting those we serve, while retaining our Vincentian identity and voice. ( See Article 6.7 of the Rule).

**Objective 4: Encourage Persons doing Research in the subjects of interest to use the Virtual Library in the [www.ozanet.org](http://www.ozanet.org) and to exchange/share their know –how with the society**

Lines of action to achieve Objective 4:

Action 4.1: Update Virtual Library in [www.ozanet.org](http://www.ozanet.org) with all available data about Society in world and its founders.

Action 4.2: Link the website with the virtual library/data base of Superior /National Councils to share the know-how and data.

**Objective 5: Encourage and sponsor Research in the subjects of Aboriginal (Indigenous) cultures in conferences and to exchange/share their know –how with the Society in the geographical areas where this subject have relevance.**

Lines of action to achieve Objective 5:

Action 5.1: Study this subject area in depth for enabling the Indigenous people to protect and strengthen their traditional values and culture.

Action 5.2: Sponsor research in developing new avenues and methods for improving the quality of life of Indigenous people by using twinning as a tool and thereby integrate them more with the mainstream of the Society.

## Section IV: Details of the Strategic Lines of Action for Selected Objectives

### Objective 1: **To formulate a Policy on Research and initiate research**

- Action 1.1: Constitute a core team of experts
- Action 1.2: Consolidate and capitalize all data
- Action 1.3: Take steps for preserving documents, materials and data
- Action 1.4: Establish a research/reference centre with library
- Action 1.5: Initiate research
- Action 1.6: Propose Guidelines for research in the lower levels

Important milestones – Identification of members (January, 2006)  
Constitution of team of experts (April, 2006)  
Establishment of research centre (April, 2007)  
Propose Guidelines for research (April, 2006)

Person responsible for this line of action: Second General Vice President of II Division and President of Commission for Historical research and International Formation

## C. SPIRITUALITY

### Section I: Definition of Working Area

#### I.1: Definition of Working Area

Prayer and work (faith and practice) are the integral parts of Vincentian Spirituality. It strengthens the personal commitment of a member. Strategic direction, which can increase the level of Spirituality among all members from conference level to Council General office, by improving the quality of their faith and spiritual practice in personal life will easily achieve a better Society.

And the Strategic Goal has to be achieved by integrating deep spirituality within all activities of the Society, and by making all Councils of the Society responsible.

It should also consider the spiritual characteristic of this Society, its full inclusion in the action of the General Council and how this should succeed in really guiding the life of the whole Society.

#### I.2: Description of Current Situation

Society derived its Principles of Spirituality from its Founders and their Inspirators. ( See Article 1.1 of the Rule). Expression of faith and spirituality is visible in many forms during Conference meetings. ( See Article 1.7 of the Rule). And Spirituality is the main reason for Sustainability of members.

The new rule re-iterates the importance of Vincentian spirituality and it gives sufficient details for 'the journey together towards Holiness'. ( See Article 2.2 of the Rule). The subject area is more depended on the work of Spiritual Advisors.

The need of Spiritual foundation in the character of Society is well accepted. But the Society is also facing the repercussions of social and ethical conflicts. This reflects in the quality of Spirituality also. The members and its leaders quite often get strangled in the confusing interpretations of practical problems in Spirituality. The originality of Vincentian Spirituality is challenged and tested under multifaceted conditions.

## Section II: Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

### II.1: Introduction to the SWOT analysis

The Spirituality cannot be easily measured like money, work or service. But proper examination from different perspective can help to reach some assumptions. Considering the vast geographical and cultural diversity among the member countries/councils, Spirituality cannot be compared by its mode of expression. But we can depend more on the quality of service output under their given circumstances. Feed back from present and former spiritual advisors and office bearers were also helpful to do this analysis.

### II.2: Strengths

- Spiritual background in the tradition, work and life of members from the very beginning.
- Catholic origin and history helps to live ourselves in resonance with the Church teachings.
- Cordial and mutually enriching relation with church.
- Basics of Vincentian Spirituality deep rooted in Christian beliefs and textures.
- Practicing spirituality in their daily life enables members to get deep rooted in faith.
- Acceptance of Spirituality of society by all other Non- Catholic and Non-Christian Communities
- Due importance given for spirituality in the New International Rule and Clarity in its interpretation .
- Presence of Spiritual advisors in all levels of activities provides constant inspiration.
- Practice of compulsory prayer and Bible reading in the meetings.
- Spiritual approach in social work by members
- Catechism in schools gives good basics for new members
- Direct knowledge on poverty through visits to poor makes the members to remember the spiritual aspects of life.
- Support given by other organizations in the Vincentian family

### II.3: Weaknesses

- Social problems/evils affects the nature of Society
- Intrusion of political ideas into the culture of Society.
- Degeneration of moral values in public life.
- Disparity in spiritual and personal life.
- Lack of clarity among members on Vincentian spirituality.
- Professional and social nature of work
- Lack of sufficient spiritual retreats and refresher programmes
- Lack of time for members for participating in spiritual activities.
- Absence of system for correction and clarification in the principle issues.
- Decline in spirituality in some areas of Church.
- Methods of Evaluations mostly based on performance in materialistic areas, as spirituality is difficult to measure.

### II.4: Opportunities

- Majority members admit the shortfall in spirituality.
- Members are ready to participate in rejuvenation of spirituality.
- Renewal and Charismatic movement in the Church enables the members to improve in Spirituality
- Mutual Prayers between twinning conferences.
- Family members of all vincentians can be solicited to the spiritual stream

### II.5: Threats

- Attempts to change the character of the Society to a Social organization rather than Spiritual Organization
- Low priority by members for the spiritual improvement comparable to social work.
- Members enrolled with vested interests
- Non-allotment or non availability of funds for spiritual retreats
- □ Invasion of Consumerist culture and Globalization in all walks of public life.
- Penetration of corruption halts attempts for improving Spirituality.
- Attempts to compromise on Spirituality for rapid improvement in other areas of Social work.

- Persons without sufficient personal conviction and spiritual motivation entering the leadership levels.
- Accumulation of money
- Large scale investment in infrastructure and establishments
- Concentration of power
- Attempts to make society more attractive like other organizations

### Section III: Vision, Objectives and Strategic Lines of Action

#### Section III. A: Vision

Enable the Vincentian Charism to be understood and lived by all members

Continuously monitor, update and promote the Catholic faith and unique characteristics of the Vincentian Spirituality at every level of the Society.

#### Section III.B: Objectives and Strategic Lines of Action

##### **Objective 1: To Establish Spirituality as the foundation of Vincentian Social work Lines of action to achieve Objective 1:**

Action 1.1: Appoint a commission for study on the Vincentian Spirituality with special perspective on current social situations and issues, which may affect the Society and publish the study results as a reference document

Action 1.2: Geographical and Work Areas, which require more attention in Spirituality has to be identified locally by periodical Reviews

Action 1.3: Specific action plan has to be evolved targeting Thrust areas.

Action 1.4: More involvement of Spiritual Advisors shall be solicited in the specified areas by interacting with spiritual advisors of lower councils by upper level office bearers

##### **Objective 2: To secure active involvement of Spiritual Advisor in every Council, Conference and Special Work**

Lines of action to achieve Objective 2:

Action 2.1: Council General shall define the roles of Spiritual Advisors and take initiative for their better involvement in Spiritual matters and policies.

Action 2.2: Identify and develop additional/ supplementary materials needed by Spiritual Advisors

Action 2.3: Provide clear job descriptions for Spiritual Advisors at all levels and give guidelines in selection and appointment of Spiritual Advisors.

Action 2.4: Issue a Circular from President General clearly defining the work/role and our expectations from Spiritual Advisors.

Action 2.5: Council General and its Spiritual Advisor may establish more active and productive relationship with Spiritual Advisors of National/ Superior Councils.

Action 2.6: Seek the assistance of Priests and nuns from Vincentian families and Church or even good laymen in remote and rural areas where Spiritual Advisors are not presently available.

##### **Objective 3: Renew the Spirituality of Highest level of office bearers**

Lines of action to achieve Objective 3:

Action 3.1: The Council General shall conduct annual spiritual retreat for all its staff, permanent section members, IEC members.

Action 3.2: A Spiritual discourse by an eminent theologian shall be included in the agenda of every International Assembly.

**Objective 4: Evolve a system for defining and clarifying any point of doubt raised by a Member or Council regarding the interpretation of Vincentian Spirituality.**

Lines of action to achieve Objective 4:

Action 4.1: Council General with the active assistance of Spiritual Advisor have to make efforts to identify a team of experts in Vincentian Spirituality.

Action 4.2: Provide literature and expertise for offering clarification in the issues raised in the subject of Spirituality.

Action 4.3: Offer continuous and constant medium for promoting unique characteristics of the Vincentian spirituality through website and more clarity can be given for Practicing Vincentian Spirituality from the CGI office.

Action 4.4: Initiate liaisoning with Catholic Church and make members more aware about the policies and directions declared periodically by Holy See.

**Objective 5: To spread the uniqueness of Vincentian Spirituality as a way of life for salvation. ( See Article 2.5.1. of the Rule).**

Lines of action to achieve Objective 5:

Action 5.1: Establish that achievement of maximum level of Self sacrifice ( renunciation) from the part of members is the ultimate aim of Vincentian work.

Action 5.2: Project the life of our Founders, their Inspirators and the members like Blessed Contardo Ferrini and Blessed Georgio Fresati who gained the eternal reward as recognized by Church. ( See Article 2.4 and 2.5 of the Rule).

Action 5.2.1: Make our members and Church aware more about the life of the above and celebrate their feasts for recapturing their spirituality.

Action 5.3: Give great thrust towards the development of the formation of Conference members on the Vincentian level (the Vincentian spirit and its most important principles, the knowledge of its principal figures: Vincent de Paul, Frederick Ozanam, Louise de Marillac), as well as the level of Christian fundamentals and, lastly, of understanding poverty under these aspects.

**Section IV: Details of the Strategic Lines of Action for Selected Objectives**

**Objective 1: To Establish Spirituality as the foundation**

Action 1.1: Appoint a commission for study on the Vincentian Spirituality

Action 1.2: Identify areas require more attention in Spirituality

**Objective 2: To secure active involvement of Spiritual Advisor**

Action 2.2: Develop and provide information needed by Spiritual Advisors

Action 2.3: Provide clear job descriptions for Spiritual Advisors

Action 2.3: Give guidelines for appointing and selecting of Spiritual Advisors.

Action 2.4: Issue a Circular defining work of Spiritual Advisors.

**Objective 3: Renew the Spirituality of Highest level of office bearers**

Action 3.1&2 Conduct Spiritual retreat

**Objective 4: Evolve a system for interpreting Vincentian Spirituality.**

Action 4.1: Identify a team of experts in Vincentian Spirituality.

Action 4.3: Offer continuous and constant medium for promoting unique characteristics of the Vincentian spirituality

Important milestones –

Commission for study on the Vincentian Spirituality (January, 2006)

Identification of areas requires attention in Spirituality (April, 2006)

Evolve a system for interpreting Vincentian Spirituality (April, 2006)

Person responsible for this line of action: Second General Vice President of IV Division and International Spiritual Advisor

## **Working Area: COUNSELS TO THE PRESIDENCY**

### **Section I: Definition of Working Area**

#### I.1: Definition of Working Area

This aim of this area is to collect the most relevant "counsels" that the members of the St Vincent de Paul Society have to suggest to the Presidency of the Society, in order for the Society to fulfill its mission of service to the poor in *today's* world in the best possible way.

These counsels to the Presidency are in two areas:

- a) what are some of the most important roles the Presidency should take on board and develop and
- b) what are some of the personal qualities and skills that the Presidency should have or develop.

This is not an exhaustive analysis nor does it aim to amend in any way the Rule of the Society. It is an analysis in the context of the International Strategic Plan. Also, the counsels do not relate to any particular President General, but rather apply the Presidency itself, as a pivotal post of the Society.

An effort was made to collect counsels from a representative cross section of the Society (State, Diocesan, Regional, Conference presidents and members.) ranks of the society.

#### I.2 Description of Current Situation

It was decided early in the International Strategic Plan that the role of the Presidency, as a key element of the Society's international Structure, should be analyzed as a separate area in itself.

### **Section II: Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**

#### II.1 Introduction to the SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis has been carried out with a good cross section of Society membership, e.g. State, Diocesan, Regional, Conference presidents and members.

#### II.2 Strengths

- Spirituality is our major strength. We must always guard it.
- The Society has always supported the Church hierarchy and it must continue to do so.
- The new International Rule is great. As our founder Blessed Frederic Ozanam said, we must move with the times and be flexible. The Rule can easily be adapted to the changing world and conditions any time in the future.
- We must ensure that our leader is the best possible person, male or female.
- Very important that we maintain professional personnel in our International Office.
- Visitation IN PAIRS must be strictly enforced. We are the only international organization which performs this work for the needy by home visitation.
- Twinning is now recognized as an expansion of the St Vincent de Paul Society. It is important that we expand this special work in the Society.
- Strong spiritual component of the Vincenzapaul Magazine is important in maintaining the spirit of our Society-
- We are recognized as a genuine worldwide organization which is respected for honoring its commitments.

### II.3 Weaknesses

- Must ensure that the PG maintains complete transparency and accountability in all the international areas.
- The PG must employ effective delegation to obtain maximum efficiency of the Council General
- The PG must improve his visual exposure in the international community.
- The PG should at all times communicate to the grass roots membership. There is a lack of visible presence of President General – grass roots should know the President General, few do at this time.
- The PG should pursue all avenues available to ensure the continuation of St Vincent de Paul internationally.
- Unvincenian behavior must not be tolerated anywhere.
- Lack of training for Presidents and succession planning
- Insufficient time given for meetings; working papers and documentation not given with enough time to prepare meetings.
- Ageing membership. The PG has an accountability to promote youth in the Society.
- Lack of female members in senior positions is an indictment of Vincenian culture.
- The PG should advocate on all areas of need in the world.
- Grass roots members do not know often the difficulty of funding the Council General operation.
- Excess funds not being passed through to higher Councils. (This is part of our International Rule).
- Not all special works have a Business Plan before any financial commitments are entered into.
- The PG should ensure that wherever possible the Youth should be represented on Council General carrying on what Blessed Frederic Ozanam started.

### II.4 Opportunities

- The graying population should be encouraged to join the Society.
- Growing membership in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries is the strength of the Society. They must be supported.
- The Permanent Section should have globalize representation which is now easier with modern day communication systems.
- The PG should have all the up to date statistics of global poverty and should speak out on the international scene at every opportunity.
- Technology – the Society must take advantage of this not only for news items but for fundraising purposes and more effective data collection. This will improve efficiency.
- The PG should be aware of changing policies, i.e. Free Trading, where certain sections of the community are disadvantaged and advocate on their plight.
- The good initiatives that the St Vincent de Paul has introduced in many countries should be encouraged and other countries made aware of them and given advice on starting up such projects.

### II.4 Threats

- The Society is competing in a fast moving, instant, world where material possession and self interest dominate.
- The demand for the Society's services across the world is increasing and our capacity to assist is diminishing.
- Know more about other well supported youth groups, i.e. Sun Youth (Canada). What have they got that attracts members?
- Changing legislation, regulations and compliance that can be costly, i.e. health and safety, risk management, etc. can restrict our operations.
- Cost of changing technology.
- Unbudgeted expenditure and capacity to meet emergency situations. No financial decisions should be entered into outside budget.
- All weaknesses if undetected or ignored will seriously threaten the Society's operations. The PG should not allow this to happen.

## Section III: Vision, Objectives and Strategic Lines of Action

### Section III.A: Vision

Our Vision is ensure that the President General has:

- the most appropriate personal qualities, experience and skills
- access to necessary support resources (material, financial and human)
- access to the working procedures, goals and objectives

to perform his or her duties leading the St Vincent de Paul Society in the most effective, professional and economical way, ensuring the continuation and viability of the Society world-wide, maintaining the high principles and Vision of our founder Blessed Frederic Ozanam in a changing world, moving with the demands of the times.

From the SWOT analysis above, the following Counsels to the PG are derived.

#### Qualities of the President General

- The PG should have the qualifications and experience to “take over the job straight away” after his or her appointment.
- The PG should be high in spirituality and charismatic, with the ability to bring people together; all embracing
- Possess good delegation skills – the ability to assign meaningful tasks to people and follow-up on them – to maximize the efficiency of the Council General
- The appointment to PG President should be the pinnacle of a distinguished career of service for the Society.

#### Leadership Style of the PG

- Internally, the PG should take on a clear leadership role within the Society, be recognized in all Conferences and familiar to all Vincentians.
- Externally, the PG should be recognized and respected internationally, being a high-profile leader in the world scene. The PG should cultivate relationships at the highest levels with international organizations, Governments and the Church.
- The PG should at all times communicate to the “grass roots” membership of the Society worldwide
- The President should be a “servant leader”
- The PG should lead the Society by advocating for the poor and taking a Vincentian stance on key social issues, being a recognized reference point internationally. The PG must have access to updated world statistics, information and policies as needed.

#### Administration of the Presidency

- The PG must have the possibility to construct a team of immediate collaborators, paid or volunteers, to provide professional assistance in carrying out his or her mission
- Enforce transparency and accountability at all levels
- The Presidency should have a formal succession planning objective
- The Presidency should advocate “collaborative” decision making, with the competent organizations or sections of the Society

#### Specific actions towards the Society

- Focus on 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries: growing membership in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries is the strength of the Society and they must be supported
- Encourage that young achievers are identified at the Conference, national and international levels, and that they are provided with growth opportunities to become the leaders in the future.
- The PG must ensure the Society’s financial resources are allocated where they are most needed.
- The PG should actively seek international funding for our major projects.

Section III.B: Objectives and Strategic Lines of Action

**Objective 1:** To set up a professional team of collaborators for the PG (paid or volunteer), to provide assistance to the PG in effectively carrying out his or her mission

**Objective 2:** To ensure that the finances are available to maintain the PG secretariat (collaborators, facilities) in the long term. This is the responsibility of the PG or delegated Vincentians, monitored by the Board and should be a regular Agenda item for discussion and review.

**Objective 3:** To ensure that the PG becomes a recognized voice in the international scene on social issues and global advocate for the poor.

**Objective 4:** To set up a home office for the PG, and to communicate it to the Society and other international organization (that the PG can be easily reached by any Vincentian worldwide)

...