

TRC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 26 NOVEMBER 2017

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

1 WELCOME

Let me first take this opportunity to thank all our affiliates and well-wishers of TRC for your continued support over the years. With your support, TRC has been able to be more harmonious and stable.

I note the presence of many eminent community leaders like (announce names of leaders seated in the front) today. Their presence today shows the amount of passion and respect they and their organizations have for TRC.

I will also like to welcome all members and affiliate representatives present today and appreciate your support. I look forward to your continued contributions and support in years to come.

2 APPRECIATION

First let me take this opportunity to thank and appreciate the following members for their long service and commitment to TRC and the Tamil Community at large.

Dr R Theyvendran; Dr N R Govinden, Mr R Balan, Mr Thangasundram, Mr Souri, and Mr Gunasegaran.

Dr Theyvendran stepped down as President in September 2016 giving way for leadership changes. Together with him Dr N R Govinden and Mr Balan also stepped down which allowed for some key changes to the Management Council. I thank them for having the far-sight to recognize the need for leadership renewal and voluntarily giving way and continuing to support TRC. Dr Theyvendran continues to be the Immediate Past President and has been constantly giving his advice, patronage and "piece of mind" and without charging us any fees of course. I am indeed grateful to him for his continued guidance and support. I hope that he will continue this relationship.

As for Dr N R Govinden and Mr Balan, being senior leaders of the community and having a wealth of experience, TRC does not wish for them to 'retire' too soon even though they have stepped down from the Management Council. I am glad to inform that the Management Council has decided to appoint them as Advisors to the Sub-Committees under the TRC Management Council. I am also happy to note that they have accepted our offer and we will be discussing with them soon on their role and responsibilities. Such appointments allow for seamless transition of leaders where the experienced and seniors hand-over to the younger generation, but continue to be active in guiding them. Thank you Dr N R Govinden and thank you Mr Balan.

I am also thankful to Mr Thangasundram, Mr Souri and Mr Gunasegaran for your past support and contributions and look forward to your continued presence and contributions. Both Mr Thanga and Mr Guna have assured me of their continued support. As for Mr Souri, I have invited him continue with us as an Internal Auditor and I am happy to note that he has agreed.

3 ACHIEVEMENTS

It has been 1 year since the composition of the Management Council was changed. I now stand before you as the President of TRC, and Mr Tharmaraj as the Gen Secretary. Mr Kalaichelvam (President of Periyar Sevai Mandram) and Mr Sathinathan (Lawyer by profession) are the current 2 Vice Presidents together with Mr Balakrishnan and Mr Mashuthoo.

It has been a busy year with TRC having organized a number of events like:

- Suvadugal (joint with NLB)
- Futsal Tournament (joint with Tamil Murasu)
- Sorpor (joint with TLLPC/MOE)
- Bursary Awards
- National Day Dinner

We have also continued to support various Affiliates and Organisations like LISHA, SINDA, Narpani Pearavai, TLC, TLCS, NUS, NTU etc with funding, resources or publicity.

We have continued our strong and close relationship with all major Indian Organisations and also established working relationships with the student bodies of NUS, NTU and SMU.

The Management Council has set-up 4 sub-committees to better manage its activities. These subcommittees would also serve in identifying potential leaders, identifying new areas that we could focus on, improving relationship with Affiliates and Partners, increasing membership and so on. Each subcommittee is chaired by one of the Vice President. The Management Committee has established the terms of reference and requirements for each sub-committee. The sub-committees are as follows:

- I. Affiliates and Partners chaired by Mr V Balakrishnan;
- II. Education and Cultural Issues, chaired by Mr A R Mashuthoo;
- III. Membership chaired by Mr V Kalaichelvam; and
- IV. Youth Matters chaired by Mr K Sathinathan.

At the last MC meeting members have suggested a review of the sub-committees and to also have additional committees to look at raising funds, proper office premises etc. We hope to review this after the AGM and implement accordingly.

In 2017, we have come up with 2 newsletters to all members in addition to having revamped our website and the posting of information on Facebook, email blasts and website. We will continue this and strive to come up with a newsletter every quarter. However, members need to understand the need to be prudent as newsletters cost about \$1000 per issue (printing and posting). Emailing will be a good option, but not everyone may be comfortable with that. But I will like to urge each member to visit our website regularly and look out for our updates. Members could also provide feedback to us via email or the website rather than wait until the AGM.

This year, TRC has also been more involved with other organisations like SINDA, Peoples Association, LISHA, MOE etc. We have established strong partnerships with them and will continue exploring more ways of cooperating. We have also been fortunate in getting continued support from Lee Foundation, Tote Board, MDIS, MES, TCC and MOE in terms of funding, sponsorship and venue support. I need to specifically thank Dr Theyvendran for his continued

support in allowing us to use MDIS at discounted rates for our events like Sorpor. This year, TRC has also been able to get funding from the Lee Kuan Yew Bilingual Fund and I understand we could be the first Tamil organization to do so. We hope to expand our scope of funding partners and tap on various other funding that may be available to community organisations.

4 MEMBERSHIP

Our current membership strength is around 1345. This includes Life members, ordinary members and youth members. Those contributing through monthly GIRO deductions are also considered as ordinary members. We have seen an increase in the number of life members from 281 to 298 (increase of 17). However, we have also seen an 8-10 % decrease in ordinary membership due to natural attrition, and members not paying their subscriptions despite several reminders.

The membership sub-committee has been looking at ways to sustain membership through engagements and active canvassing during events. We hope to come up with more ideas and welcome feedback from members on increasing and sustaining membership.

5 FUNDING

Our funds remain constant as compared to the past few years and I am glad to announce that for 2016, we had an income over expenditure of around \$1700. This is in comparison to the previous 2 years where our expenses were slightly higher than our income. I have to thank our past President Dr Theyvendran for his prudent measures and for being always careful on spending for TRC to be in a healthy state.

This year we have been fortunate in getting funding support from our usual well-wishers and MOE. We have also been extra careful in our spending. SO NO LUCKY DRAW TODAY! (PAUSE). We were very careful in ensuring that this year's events (including NDD) did not incur much expenses and that they were covered by surplus funds. I am confident that there will be surplus at the end of this year too.

6 GIRO

Through GIRO we are receiving about \$2500 each month. I would say this is only sufficient to cover the staff's salary and admin expenses like rental, telephone charges and meeting refreshments. We can't depend on this for very long. There has been no new GIRO contributor for the past few years. To encourage more people to contribute via GIRO, we need pull factors to attract them. There needs to be a focused approach on this and I intend to actively look into this during the next term.

7 Affiliates & Partners

We have had 1 dialogue session with Affiliate leaders early this year. In addition on many occasions, I have had the opportunity to meet the various Affiliate leaders and have always been attentive of their feedback and inputs. In fact more than half of the MC members are involved in our Affiliate organisations and there are ample opportunities for their views to be presented to the MC. Apart from formal meetings, we have emails and WhatsApp chat groups to discuss issues and I assure you that your views will be respected and considered.

There are plans to engage the Affiliates for a half-day session in the 1st quarter of 2018 to discuss on joint activities and bilateral issues faced by all and how we can move forward. Again do not wait until the AGM. Through your representatives in the MC you are free to raise issues or give feedback. We have one of our VPs (Mr Bala) coordinating this and you can bring these to him or any of the MC members.

I am also glad to inform that our Affiliate strength is now at 40. Since the last AGM 4 more organisations have joined us. We will continue to identify more organisations and persuade them to join the family. Remember our strength lies in the numbers that we represent and the unified voice that we carry. We may have inadvertently missed out some of your names on our listing or publicity materials. I apologise for that. I will also appreciate if all Affiliates could promptly update us on any changes to your address and key member details so that there are no communication gaps. At the same time all Affiliates are required to pay \$100 per year as subscription to show your commitment as a member organization. The amount is really not that high and my humble request is to be prompt when we make the request and if there are real financial difficulties approach us so that we can then discuss on how this can be managed.

We should not forget our partners too. We constantly engage and work together with SINDA, Narpani, TLCS, LISHA, TLC, TLLPC, SICCI, Vasantham, Tamil Murasu and many others. I am thankful for the support and cooperation and we will continue with this strong relationship.

9 Building

The issue of TRC having its own premises has been brought up at each AGM and without fail, I have received communication on this matter for this AGM too. A few years back, there was some serious discussion and some Affiliates like SKML and Tamil Writers Association gave assurance to contribute towards any fund raising for this. Other Affiliates had also voiced their support.

Securing a building or premises may be easy. Maintaining will be the challenge. We should all come together and work on this if we want something concrete for the Tamil Community. This will be one of the major focus area for the next term. Even at the last meeting Mr Mashuthoo and Mr Lukshumayeh had tabled ideas that we should concentrate on fund raising and ensure that we are strong and viable.

Whether we get our own premises or lease one, we need to be financially strong to embark on this. I intend to work with some key members of the MC and representatives from the Affiliates beginning in early next year to draw up an execution plan so when we approach you for support and assistance we can be assured that it will be available.

10 TRC Cooperative

Let me just say a few words on the TRC Cooperative. Sometime in June this year the current Board had approached TRC to come forward to assist in managing its affairs. The Management Council discussed the request and agreed to assist. During the AGM called by the current Board on 30/6/2017, members were informed that MCCY had done a special audit and made some findings that caused some concern amongst the members. The AGM then resolved to adjourn the meeting to end September and tasked the Board to finalize its accounts for 2015 and 2016, rectify membership data issues and loan records. Mr Kalaichelvam (TRC VP) was coopted as a member of the Board and myself as an Internal Auditor.

Steps were taken to engage the current Board and the accounts for 2015 and 2016 are now with the external auditors. Membership data and loan records have also been rectified to a certain extent (not 100%). MCCY has been constantly kept informed of the Board's activities and it has given until early next year to clear the accounts and re-convene the AGM.

TRC has always been concerned about the affairs of the Coop and will play its part in ensuring that the Society is revived and made viable again.

11 Next Steps

For the next 2 years, we hope to build on the success and progress we have made thus far and we look forward to your continued support.

Some plans that I would like to share with you are:

- Retreat for MC members to discuss and come up with a strategic map for TRC.
- Reviewing the Constitution to make it more current.
- Membership, GIRO reviews.
- Fund Raising efforts.
- Strengthening ties with Affiliates and Partners.

I urge you to join us and give us suggestions, feedback and inputs and together let us build a better Society for our Community.

Finally, I will like to thank all Affiliates and Partner organisations for your support, members of the Management Council for your cooperation and commitment, all Volunteers for your assistance, Dr Theyvendran for your continued guidance and you members for your confidence in the current leadership.

Thank you.