

This is the third of three videos covering the material in the 2014 *Conference Agenda Report*. Please visit www.na.org/conference to download all three videos and access any other conference material.

Introduction

Hello from NA World Services. In preparation for the upcoming World Service Conference, we are creating this video as a way to present information from the *Conference Agenda Report*, or *CAR*. Our hope is that summarizing the *CAR* in a different medium will make it easier to understand and workshop. This video can be used by individuals, homegroups, or workshops and service meetings—anywhere that people might be discussing and deciding on the information in the *CAR*. Any specific feedback about this video can be directed to us at worldboard@na.org.

This video does not cover the entire contents of the *CAR*; it focuses on the regional proposals. We wanted to keep the video as short as possible so it's important to remember that the *Conference Agenda Report* itself contains more information on each of the topics we cover here as well as general conference preparations.

The *CAR* can be downloaded free at www.na.org/conference, or you can order a hard copy by mail for \$8 from NA World Services.

Regional Proposals

In creating the 2014 *Conference Agenda Report*, we struggled with two big questions related to regional proposals: 1. What should we recommend for the future of the proposal experiment? And 2. How do we deal with the proposals submitted for this *CAR*?

The essay on the regional proposals within the *CAR* itself provides some background about our efforts to move away from sessions dominated by parliamentary procedure and toward making decisions based in discussion and consensus. We encourage you to read that essay for a more detailed accounting of the regional proposal experiment and our recommendations for the future..

In this video, we are going to focus on the second topic—how we have approached the proposals submitted for this *CAR*.

None of the proposals would have met current policy for inclusion in the *CAR* as motions. In order for a proposal to be “*CAR*-ready,” it must be unambiguous and understandable, and it must be clear to those discussing the proposal what it affects and what the consequences of approving it would be. Each of the proposals submitted for the 2014 *CAR* is unclear, is impossible to execute, or fails to consider conference policy.

When contacted to address the challenges—that is, to clarify intent, or to include the policy the proposal seeks to change, or to make the proposal comply with conference policy—the makers were not willing or able to adapt the proposals to meet these needs. The proposal process is new to all of us, and we could probably have provided better information and direction.

Because we are in the middle of an experiment, the World Board is not willing to simply leave these proposals out of the *CAR* entirely, as has occurred in the past with regional

motions that were incomplete or unclear. The only reasonable compromise that we have been able to come up with is to provide access to the proposals by including them as an addendum to the CAR (Addendum C) and to try to summarize the basic ideas that the conference could decide to take action on here for fellowship discussion. There are five such summary proposals. Following each proposal, we have provided an explanation of the challenges with the original proposals and a Board response to the ideas.

Proposal A: To place a moratorium on the Service System Proposals. Ideas for the moratorium range from two to four years.

Five proposals ask that a moratorium be placed on the Service System Project, calling out in particular funding, implementation, or efforts to put into effect a transition plan.

There are several challenges with these proposals.

First, it's not clear what would and would not be covered by such a moratorium. The Service System Project consists of a broad range of ideas and recommendations. For instance: Would a moratorium cover any new tools related to consensus-based decision making or planning at a local level? Would it apply to answering questions from members about the project? The specifics of what such a moratorium would cover are not clear.

Second, at least four of the five proposals attempt to direct local communities by placing a moratorium on the fellowship for implementation of any of these ideas. The World Service Conference and NA World Services are not in a position to place or enforce mandates on local service bodies.

Another aspect of the proposals we see as impossible to execute is the type of accounting one of the proposals calls for. We do not break out portions of a trip or of staff time related to a specific project. The financial reporting related to this project has already been audited and published in accordance with standard accounting practices.

WB Response:

The Service System Project Plan has been adopted and reaffirmed three conferences in a row. Placing a moratorium on this project to allow the fellowship time to learn about and research the service system proposals seems counterintuitive; when the project is current focused on how the proposals are being put into practice and adapted locally. Placing a moratorium on the project would only serve to stifle this information-gathering. We have already scaled back the amount of money allocated to the project. Our intention with continuing to focus on this project is that ultimately we will end up with ideas, practical experience, tools, and guidance shaped by fellowship experience.

Proposal B: To specify the specific decision-making mechanism for anything related to the SSP.

There were two proposals submitted that seek to affect the decision-making mechanism for anything related to the Service System Project. One of the proposals asks that the SSP Proposal in its entirety be brought to the WSC floor “for the first time” for a two-thirds majority vote. The other proposal directs what will be placed in the 2014 *CAR*.

It is impossible to implement either of these as written. Motions passed at the World Service Conference take effect at the close of that conference. A motion that wishes to affect what will be in the 2014 *Conference Agenda Report* would have needed to be presented at the 2012 conference.

Further, the 2012 conference already showed strong opposition to a proposal “That any decisions regarding the SSP be included in the 2014 *CAR* and require 2/3 vote to pass.”

WB Response: We have already made the commitment to put decisions about the Service System Proposals in the *CAR*; the transition plans, which will be in the Conference Approval Track material, are simply a project plan about how to help discuss and implement what the WSC decides.

We would not be able to offer anything about this project “for the first time,” because the conference has already approved the project three times and agreed in principle to the ideas within the resolutions in the 2012 *CAR*.

Proposal C: Currently seated regions retain their seat at the WSC forever

This is an attempt to ensure that future decisions related to seating include a provision to retain all currently seated regions. In this sense, it seems like an attempt to amend something not yet adopted.

WB Response:

We suggest that the idea be reintroduced when the decision it seeks to affect is actually before the conference. To adopt a condition on a policy not yet drafted would seem to be taking things in the wrong order. We are not yet at a place where we share a vision of what the conference might look like in the future, which is why we do not yet have long term recommendations for a comprehensive seating policy. It seems a better use of our time to discuss what possibilities we see for the future of our global fellowship’s decision making process.

Proposal D: Ideas to evaluate or reduce WSC costs either by creating a workgroup to look into conference costs or by eliminating World Board travel to the WSC.

Summary of and Challenges with the Original Proposals: There are two proposals related to conference cost: one to create a workgroup to look into WSC costs and another to eliminate World Board travel, except for the WB chair, to the WSC.

NA World Services operates with a two-year strategic plan and budget. Planning, funding, and coordinating diverse business and service needs over the course of a two-year cycle

requires time. The projects that are presented to the WSC are a result of the finished plan for the upcoming cycle. There are many ways to get ideas included in the planning process, but that process must be initiated before the *Conference Agenda Report*.

For the 2014–2016 cycle the projects the board is recommending are a Traditions book and service system. The budget for decision at the conference has been projected with these projects in mind. The idea to create a workgroup would, therefore, have to be committed to the WB to bring back a project plan and budget to WSC 2016. We believe that conference participants will have already discussed many of the issues related to conference funding by that time.

WB Response: International workgroups cost an average of \$250,000 per cycle, and we feel the expense is not warranted for the logistics of the WSC. We have evaluated and will continue to evaluate options related to the cost of the conference and report on our discussions and encourage an active dialogue.

Further, we do not believe eliminating board attendance at the conference is a responsible way to cut costs. As the body charged with carrying out the will of the WSC in the two years between meetings, we need to hear and understand what it is the conference wants from us.

While NA as a whole has been increasingly using technology to further discussion, we do not feel meeting virtually is a replacement for face-to-face meetings. Online meetings can be useful for touching base, framing, or even redirecting work, but not so good for making decisions.

Other Considerations

The *CAR* is the first of the conference-related mailings that conference participants will receive. The Conference Approval Track material will be mailed by 27 January, and will contain the budget and project plans. Among the project plans for the 2014-2016 conference cycle will be a transition plan for the Service System Project, a project plan for workshops with particular emphasis on affordable approaches to reaching more members, and an updated project plan for a traditions workbook, which will focus on the drafting and review and input for that project.

The Conference is the event that brings us together to discuss and decide matters on behalf of NA as a whole. As the Basic Text mentions, though, when we join together as a Fellowship united by our shared principles, the whole is much greater than the sum of its parts. Our principles—and our efforts to put them into practice, as individuals, groups, service committees, and collectively as a global fellowship—are the Ties that Bind Us Together. We look forward to strengthening those bonds at WSC 2014.

For more information on the conference, go to www.na.org/conference.