

# BASIC INCOME EARTH NETWORK GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

DUBLIN, 21 JUNE 2008

## MINUTES

The meeting is chaired by Guy Standing and Eduardo Suplicy, BIEN co-chairs, and Philippe Van Parijs, chair of the BIEN International Board. Guy Standing records a strong vote of thanks to the Dublin organizing committee of the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress of BIEN on behalf of BIEN's Executive Committee and Life-Members.

### 1. Financial Report

The Secretary & Treasurer, David Casassas, gives the financial report. The main figures are provided below:

Financial situation on November 2006: EUR 16.290,10

Revenues November 2006 – June 2008:

\* New Life-members: EUR 1.271,85

\* New Bienefactors: EUR 493,95

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EUR 1.765,80

Expenses November 2006 – June 2008:

\* Executive Committee meetings travel costs: EUR 1054,58

\* Payment server BIEN's website: EUR 28,70

\* Payment build new website: EUR 615,30

\* Payment Basic Income Studies EUR 1.200

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EUR 2.898,58

Bank Balance (interests – bank charges): EUR + 418,76

Financial situation on June 2008: EUR 15.576,08

\* Sight Account: EUR 405,28

\* Savings Account: EUR 15.170,80

David Casassas explains that the fact that there is less money in BIEN's accounts than two years ago is due to BIEN's investing in two important projects: the build of the new website and the launch of Basic Income Studies.

David Casassas announces that three new life-members joined BIEN during the Dublin Congress.

Eduardo Suplicy explains that he had proposed to BIEN videotaping the congress and shooting a documentary about basic income – he knows a Brazilian journalist who is willing to do it –, but the cost of the project would have used up all of BIEN's funds. It might be a worth considering project in the future, not now.

Guy Standing asks for acceptance of the financial report. It is accepted by acclamation.

## **2. Report on *Basic Income Studies* Funding**

Jurgen De Wispelaere, Editor of *Basic Income Studies* (BIS) explains that BIS is financially sound and operating within budget. He reports that Berkeley Electronic Press considers that BIS, which has about 500 subscriptions, is a very promising new Journal. Also, he informs that BIS's biggest expense is copyediting.

Almaz Zelleke asks whether BIEN has an outstanding financial commitment to BIS. Jurgen De Wispelaere explains that BIEN made a 4-year commitment of support, after which BIS hopes to turn a profit and pay the money back – although there is no need to do so if BIS's funds are limited.

David Casassas reminds that BIEN's initial commitment was for two years (2007 and 2008) and BIEN's General Assembly had to revisit the agreement during its Dublin meeting.

Guy Standing states that there is need to vote on whether BIEN must continue giving financial support to BIS for the next two years. The motion to support BIS for two more years is seconded and passes by acclamation.

## **3. Report on BIEN's new website**

The Website Manager, Karl Widerquist, reminds that he was authorized at an Executive Committee meeting in 2006 to hire someone to build a new website. Rachel Collins has been the person in charge of the build of the new website, which includes all the information posted on the old website and new sections and materials as well. After its design, the management of the website will be relatively simple.

Almaz Zelleke asks whether BIEN is committed to one more payment of €130 in December 2008. Karl Widerquist confirms it is and informs that Rachel Collins will update the website until December 2008. Also, Karl Widerquist asks the General Assembly for additional funds up to US\$200 for keeping the website updated in 2009. His motion is seconded and passed by acclamation.

Karl Widerquist informs that he is in process of trying to get the permission of the South Africa BIG Coalition to use a version of their logo. Seán Healy, Chairman of the Dublin Committee in charge of the organization of BIEN Congress, says that BIEN has the permission to use the Dublin Congress logo if the South African permission is not granted. Philippe Van Parijs asks whether it is worth waiting if BIEN can use the Dublin Congress logo. Karl Widerquist and Guy Standing suggest the General Assembly to stick with the original plan and wait for the South African logo. The motion is seconded and passed by acclamation.

John Baker asks whether all the old newsletters will be available on the new website. Karl Widerquist explains that all the Newsflashes that have been sent electronically are posted on the website, but not the earlier hardcopy newsletters. Philippe Van Parijs says that BIEN can supply electronic versions of the earlier newsletters as well.

#### **4. Recognition of New National Affiliate Networks**

Four proposals are submitted to the General Assembly:

##### **4.1 Canada**

James Mulvale explains that Canada has had an internet network, but it has not constituted a civil organization yet. However, 18 Canadians have attended a meeting the day before in Dublin, at which a motion has been recorded to request formal recognition by BIEN. The motion has been adopted unanimously. As soon as its members arrive in Canada, the Canadian group will find a name for their organization, will put together a steering committee, and will decide on future activities and sources of funding.

Eduardo Suplicy asks whether the Canadian group includes members from Alberta having proposed a basic income. James Mulvale says it does not. He explains that the Canadian group will foster scholarly exchange, shying away from taking and advocacy role.

Philippe Van Parijs reminds that each of the officially recognized national networks should be ecumenical and include members from as many regions in the country as possible. Thus, French-speaking Canadians should be on board too. James Mulvale agrees and explains that the Canadian organization will make an effort to gather as many people as possible, both from the English-speaking and the French-speaking regions.

A motion to officially recognize the Canadian network is seconded and passes by acclamation.

##### **4.2 Italy**

Andrea Fumagalli explains that the debate in Italy is rich, but it lacks social visibility – discussions take place primarily among small groups of academics, and there is no deep political debate on basic income. On Wednesday June 18 2008, a group of about 15 people decided to constitute “Basic Income Network Italy”, a legal, constitutional organization. The goals of this organization for its first year are creating a website, producing a periodic newsletter, gathering all kind of materials about basic income, organizing in the next year or two a national conference – the last and only one took place in 1987 –, issuing a Journal in Italian, and being in touch with Basic Income Studies for possible cooperation. Andrea Fumagalli informs that the Italian group would be honored if the 2012 BIEN Congress could take place in Italy – perhaps Ancona.

A motion to officially recognize the Italian network is seconded and passes by acclamation.

### 4.3 Japan

Toru Yamamori explains that there has been a serious academic debate for 10 years in Japan. Three academic seminars have already been held, and starting next year the first annual conference will take place. This is why last year a group of basic income scholars decided it was time for a network – at this moment there is a provisional one only.

David Casassas asks how many members the Committee would be made of. Toru Yamamori says they are six. Besides, the Japanese team has settled mailing list including about 100 email addresses. Finally, he informs that about 30 people attend the seminars the group organize.

Philippe Van Parijs notes that the composition of the Japanese group is purely academic and Kyoto-focused. Guy Standing and Philippe Van Parijs ask Toru Yamamori whether the aim of the Japanese group is to expand geographically and add non-academics to the network. Toru Yamamori states this it is, and explains that it is happening already.

A motion to officially recognize the Japanese network is seconded and passes by acclamation.

### 4.4 Mexico

Pablo Yanes explains that a couple of months ago, a diverse group registered an organization legally in Mexico as Ingreso Ciudadano-México (Basic Income-Mexico). He states that Basic Income-Mexico is a non-partisan civil association that rules its internal life by democratic principles, to which both physical persons and organizations can affiliate, that accepts and recognizes the plurality of positions and view points with respect to basic income and that counts with a board of directors elected for a two year period composed by a president, a secretary, a treasurer and four board members.

Also, Pablo Yanes informs that since November 2006 (11<sup>th</sup> BIEN Congress), the group of people that has recently created Basic Income-Mexico has carried out the following activities in favor of basic income: organization and realization of an International Seminary, the first of its kind in Mexico; publication of the first book in Mexico dedicated to basic income (*Right to Existence and Real Freedom for All*, with 2000 units); realization of an internal reflection and analysis seminary of the basic income proposal; setting into motion of a website, with information on basic Income; presenting the Basic Income proposal in the activities of the World Social Forum that took place in Mexico City in January 2008; two public presentations of the book *Right to Existence and Real Freedom for All*; participation in the colloquium by Basic Income Network Spain in November 2007; counseling the elaboration of a proposal of law for the establishment of the basic income in the Mexican Republic; meetings with politicians and practitioners; participation in radio programs where the basic income proposal was assessed; and the legal constitution and registry of the civil association.

A motion to officially recognize the Mexican network is seconded and passes by acclamation.

## 5. Venue of the Next Congress

Guy Standing states that since BIEN has become a world-wide network, there is need of alternating between congresses held in developed countries and congresses held in developing countries.

Eduardo Suplicy proposes São Paulo for 2010 BIEN Congress. He informs that he might be a presidential candidate that year, which would make his work as chair of the organizing committee much more difficult. Guy Standing suggests Eduardo Suplicy to have a co-chair, and step down from the chairing of the local team if necessary. Philippe Van Parijs reminds that the chair of the organizing committee will become a member of the EC.

Philippe Van Parijs says that the Congress should take place in May or in June at the latest, that is, not close to the presidential election. He also notes that in Brazil BIEN might be more closely associated with a particular party than ever before – Brazil's Workers Party has endorsed basic income. Those life-members of BIEN being present at the Dublin General Assembly Meeting should be aware of this.

Guy Standing states that BIEN needs a business plan within six months, to be approved by BIEN's Executive Committee. Seán Healy agrees and says that there is need of being as explicit as possible with the organizing committee about what is expected both in organizational and financial terms.

Eduardo Suplicy says that the local organizing committee will need academic support from other Latin American countries and BIEN as well. Karl Widerquist suggests that BIEN's Executive Committee and the organizing committee work this out together.

A motion to approve São Paulo as the next congress venue is seconded and passes by acclamation.

Philippe Van Parijs states that the organizing committee must give BIEN the exact dates as soon as possible. A Friday-Saturday in Mid-June or early July, possibly preceded by a "Brazil day", might be very suitable.

## **6. Elections**

### **6.1 New Executive Committee**

Philippe Van Parijs, as Chair of the International Board, reads the election by-laws, announces the nominations and calls for votes one by one.

Co-chair 1: Karl Widerquist is nominated by Guy Standing and seconded by Al Sheahan. The proposal goes unopposed. He is elected by acclamation.

Co-chair 2: Ingrid Van Niekerk is nominated by Eduardo Suplicy and seconded by Philippe Van Parijs. The proposal goes unopposed. She is elected by acclamation.

Secretary: David Casassas is nominated by Karl Widerquist and seconded by Richard Caputo. The proposal goes unopposed. He is elected by acclamation.

Treasurer: Almaz Zelleke is nominated by Philippe Van Parijs and seconded by Eduardo Suplicy. The proposal goes unopposed. She is elected by acclamation.

Newsletter Editor: Yannick Vanderborght is nominated by David Casassas and seconded by John Baker. The proposal goes unopposed. He is elected by acclamation.

Website Coordinator and Assistant to the Newsletter Editor: Simon Birnbaum is nominated by David Casassas and seconded by Philippe Van Parijs. The proposal goes unopposed. He is elected by acclamation.

Regional Coordinator/Fundraiser: there are 2 positions and 3 candidates: Louise Haagh, Eri Noguchi, and James Mulvale. David Casassas states that Louise Haagh and Eri Noguchi have already been working together and have made plans for the immediate future as well. He suggests that BIEN make good use of their expertise by electing them. Besides, BIEN's Executive Committee could co-opt James Mulvale to assist Louise Haagh and Eri Noguchi.

Karl Widerquist explains that BIEN's Executive Committee can only be a 5-9 member group, so it cannot be expanded. However, BIEN statutes allow the Executive Committee to co-opt a non-voting member.

James Mulvale states that BIEN should also think about gender balance, and he says he is willing to be co-opted instead of being elected as regional coordinator and fundraiser in the interest of gender balance within BIEN's Executive Committee.

Louise Haagh and Eri Noguchi are elected Regional Coordinators/Fundraisers by acclamation. James Mulvale will be co-opted by BIEN's Executive Committee as a non-voting Regional Coordinator/Fundraiser.

Guy Standing announces that Philippe Van Parijs has been nominated by Karl Widerquist to be the Chairperson of the International Board. The nomination has been seconded by Pablo Yanes. The proposal goes unopposed. Philippe Van Parijs is elected by acclamation.

#### 6.2 Proposal that Guy Standing and Eduardo Suplicy be named Honorary Co-presidents of BIEN for the next two years

Philippe Van Parijs explains that there is a proposal to name Guy Standing and Eduardo Suplicy Honorary co-presidents of BIEN for the next two years (until 2010 BIEN's General Assembly). The wording of the motion reads as follows: "The BIEN General Assembly creates for the next two years two honorary positions with no official duties to be called 'Honorary Co-presidents'. The Honorary Co-Presidents will be Guy Standing and Eduardo Suplicy".

The motion is seconded and passed by acclamation.

### **7. Any other business**

Guy Standing says some final words of thanks and closes of BIEN's General Assembly Meeting.