

Art. 38. The World Level

§1. *The World Council is composed of:*

- *the World Coordinator, named directly by the Rector Major;*
- *the SDB World Delegate, named by the Rector Major, and the FMA World Delegate, named by the Rector Major on the proposal of the Mother General of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians;*
- *the World Councilors, elected by the respective Regional Congresses;*
- *the World Treasurer and World Secretary, elected – by secret ballot – by the Councilors themselves.*

§2. *The World Executive Secretary (SEM) is composed of the World Coordinator, the World Treasurer, the World Secretary, the SDB World Delegate, and the FMA World Delegate.*

The SEM has the function of seeing to the ordinary acts of administration which do not require the convocation of the World Council. Within the World Council, it assumes the task of “Council for Economic Affairs” within the Association according to the terms of Canon 1280.

§3. *The term of office for members of the World Council is six years.*

§4. *The directives of the World Council come into force upon the approval of the Rector Major.*

CONSIDERATIONS

Core Themes

1. Composition of the World Council
2. Tasks and Length of Term

Keys to Understanding

Article 30 of the *Regulations* specifies that the “Rector Major avails himself ordinarily of the World Council of Salesian Cooperators, above all in the animation of the entire Association and in the coordination of the formative and apostolic initiatives.” This is so that the apostolic missionary purpose of the *Project of Apostolic Life* may be reached and also that it may have a more efficacious vitality. The World Council, therefore, collaborates with the Rector Major for the governance and the animation of the Association: it furnishes general guidelines as regards the formative, organizational, and administrative initiatives. (*Regulations* 31)

The tasks and the composition of the World Council are well-defined in the *Regulations*, Articles 31 and 32.

A. *The Composition of the World Council:*

- the World Coordinator named directly by the Rector Major;
- the SDB World Delegate named by the Rector Major and the FMA World Delegate named by the Rector Major on the proposal of Mother General of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians;
- the Regional World Councilors elected by the respective Regional Congresses; and
- the World Council Treasurer and the World Council Secretary elected – by secret ballot – by the World Councilors themselves.

B. *Roles within the World Council*

Within the Council, some specific roles are foreseen:

- The first role expressly foreseen as necessary is that of the World Coordinator. He or she is named by the Rector Major from among the members, whether nominated or elected, of the World Council and according to what is provided for in article 32 §2 of the *Regulations*.
- Another role foreseen as necessary is also that of the Treasurer. He or she is one of the members of the same Council, according to the norms of *Regulations* 32 §2. The task of the Treasurer is what is assigned to him or her by said article: to present the financial statement to this same Council so that it can be presented, in turn, through the World Coordinator, to the Rector Major for his approval on the basis of what is provided for in article 39 §3 of the *Regulations*. Not to be forgotten are other tasks foreseen by the universal legislation of the Church in regard to the administrators of ecclesiastical goods as stated in the *Code of Canon Law*.

C. *Election of the World Councilor for a Region*

Article 29 of the *Regulations* gives the norms of the establishment and the functioning of the Regional Congress. It specifies that the Provincial Coordinators and their Councils are the ones who will elect the World Councilor for each Region. To these are added the SDB and FMA Delegates designated to it by the Provincials concerned – in such a way that their total number not surpass one-third the total in the assembly of those having the right to vote.

The way to proceed in carrying out this task is specified by the Congress Regulations, approved by the World Council. All possibilities remain open, therefore, on the condition that a true representation on the level of a single Region is guaranteed and, together with this, the availability of the electors to participate effectively in the election of the World Councilor is assured.

For this reason, beyond the multiple formalities that could be proposed, there is also foreseen and, therefore, possible, voting via correspondence, according to the norm of Canon 157 §1. Naturally, this ought to be such as to guarantee the essential conditions for the canonical validity of the vote, which, in every case ought to be free, secure, secret, absolute, and designated according to the norms of Canon 172.

Approval of the modalities proposed by the World Council is included among the competencies of the Rector Major, as Supreme Moderator of the Association; this is expressly contemplated by number four of Article 38, according to which the directives of the Council “become executive only after the approval of the Rector Major.”

D. *Length of the Term of the World Council (Regulations Art. 32 §3)*

All the members of the World Council, with the exception of the Delegates, *have a six-year term*. The option for this length of time was suggested after a serene evaluation of the experience matured during the *ad experimentum* period: this is a length of time that permits the Council, on the one hand, to carry on good work for animation and coordination and, on the other, to be able to renew itself with the turnover of its own members.

E. *Tasks of the World Council (Regulations Art. 31 §4)*

The sphere of competency of the World Council is determined by Article 31 of the *Regulations* and concerns the Association universally. Such an article also indicates its general tasks concerning the animation and coordination of the formative and apostolic initiatives. Besides this, the World Council also has a characteristic judicial-administrative function, competent to resolve doubts and controversies which may arise within the Association.

F. *The Functioning of the World Council (Regulations Art. 32 §4)*

In reference to the tasks of the World Council, the article specifies the fundamental condition that must exist: “The directives of the World Council become executive only after the approval of the Rector Major.” This is required by the fact that the Rector Major “is the Superior of the Association” and avails himself of the World Council specifically for the exercise of his authoritative pastoral ministry to the Cooperators. Consequently, in order to render operative the decisions made collegially during the meetings of the Council, it is necessary to present them for prior approval of the Rector Major. This task falls to the World Coordinator.

G. *The World Executive Secretary (The SEM)*

The World Executive Secretary, or the SEM, is comprised of the World Coordinator, the World Treasurer, the World Secretary, the SDB World Delegate, and the FMA World Delegate.

Article 31 of the *Regulations* specifies in individual paragraphs: the composition of the World Council and its tasks; the election of the Councilors; the modalities of such election; the term of service of its members; the value of its directives; and the establishment of the SEM.

This body is foreseen in *Statutes* article 38 §2. The text says that the Council avails itself of a central World Executive Secretary. This can be composed of a number of persons guided by a leader. The purpose for which it was established is "to function where ordinary acts of administration are concerned." It can have a Head Officer in the person of the Secretary who acts under direct dependence upon the World Coordinator.

References

Atti e Documenti del 2° Congresso mondiale Salesiani Cooperatori (Roma 1985).

Atti e Documenti del 4° Congresso mondiale Salesiani Cooperatori (Roma 2012).

from the *Regulations of the Project of Apostolic Life*

Art. 30 The Ministry of the Rector Major

§1. The Rector Major makes Don Bosco, his mission, and his spirit present today. In him is recognized the service of unity as Don Bosco's Successor and as our common Father, the center of unity of the entire Salesian Family.

Within the Association, to him falls the charismatic task of offering guidelines necessary to guarantee the fecundity of the charism, the development of the Association, and the maturation of formative and apostolic initiative.

§2. In the exercise of his ministry, carried out personally or through the Vicar or another representative chosen by him, the Rector Major ordinarily avails himself of the Salesian Cooperator World Council, above all, for the animation of the entire Association and for the coordination of the formative and apostolic initiatives.

Art. 31 The World Council and Its Tasks

§1. In order to achieve the apostolic missionary purposes of the *Project of Apostolic Life* and for a more efficacious vitality and co-responsibility, the Rector Major avails himself of the World Council.

§2. The World Council collaborates with the Rector Major and his Vicar for the governance and the animation of the Association: it furnishes general guidelines as regard formative, apostolic, organizational, and administrative initiatives entrusted to the animation of the World Councilors.

§3. The World Council is composed of:

- the World Coordinator
- the World Treasurer
- the World Secretary
- the SDB World Delegate
- the FMA World Delegate
- the World Councilors of the individual Regions, elected at their respective Regional Congresses.

§4. The tasks of the World Council are to:

- foster the connection of all the Regions to the Rector Major;
- know the realities of the different Regions and to present them to the Rector Major;

- furnish the Rector Major with timely and useful information for making decisions and guidelines;
- promote the practical application of the Rector Major's decisions and guidelines for the Association.

§5. The specific tasks of the World Councilors are defined by the Council at its first meeting, upon the naming of the World Coordinator, according to what is indicated in the *Project of Apostolic Life*, through the adoption of a specific Handbook.

Also defined therein are the modalities regarding the participation of the Councilors in the meetings of the World Council.

§6. The World Council approves the Handbook prepared by competent bodies at the Provincial level.

§7. The World Council presents its Handbook and the Regulations of the World Congress to the Rector Major for his approval. The modalities governing the election of a World Councilor follow the indications of Canon 164 of the *Code of Canon Law*.

§8. The World Council guarantees animation at the World level via appropriate instruments of communication in the principal languages of the Association.

§9. The Regions in which the Association is ordinarily organized are:

- America Cono Sud (America South Cone)
- Africa e Madagascar (Africa and Madagascar)
- Asia Est e Oceania (East Asia and Oceania)
- Asia Sud (South Asia)
- Brasile (Brazil)
- Europa Centrale e Est (Eastern and Central Europe)
- Europa Centrale e Ovest (Western and Central Europe)
- Iberica (Iberia)
- Interamerica
- Italia-Medio Oriente-Malta (Italy-Middle East-Malta)
- Pacifico Caribe Sud (Pacific and South Caribbean).

Art. 32 The Functioning of the World Council

§1. So as to render its work easier and more functional, the World Council avails itself of a "World Executive Secretary" (SEM). It is composed of the World Coordinator, the World Councilor Secretary, the World Councilor Treasurer, the World SDB Delegate, and the World FMA Delegate.

§2. As regards the nomination of the World Coordinator, the World Councilors, the World SDB Delegate, and the World FMA Delegate propose to the Rector Major three names of persons chosen, even from outside the Council.

The World Treasurer and the World Secretary are chosen by secret ballot. These may also be chosen from among Cooperators not on the Council. In the case that those chosen should be elected members of the Council, the person who had the second highest number of votes from the elections in his/her respective Region will take on the role of World Councilor.

§3. All the elected members of the World Council have a six-year term of office and, ordinarily, will not be re-elected for a second consecutive term.

§4. The directives of the World Council become binding only after the Rector Major has approved them.

§5. Ex-World Coordinators and ex-Delegates may be invited for the work of the World Council, but without the right to vote.

Art. 33 The World Congress

§1. The World Congress, the greatest expression of representation of the Association, gathers together, from time to time, Salesian Cooperators from all the Regions in unity and communion with the Rector Major according to the defined organizational modalities, on the basis of the specific purposes of the Congress.

§2. The World Congress is convoked mostly to:

- approve modifications to the *Project of Apostolic Life*;
- confront topics of specific interest at the world level;
- establish working guidelines regarding the topics listed on the order of the day;
- celebrate particularly important moments of the life and history of the Association and of the Church.

§3. The participants in the World Congress by right are:

- the Supreme Moderator, the Rector Major of the Salesian Congregation of Don Bosco
- the Vicar of the Rector Major, Councilor for the Salesian Family
- the Mother General of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (or her delegate)
- the World Councilors:
 - the World Coordinator
 - the World SDB Delegate
 - the World FMA Delegate
 - the World Councilors of the SEM (the Coordinator, 2 Delegates, Treasurer, and Secretary)
 - the World Councilors representing the 11 Regions
- the Provincial Coordinators
- one or more representatives in addition to the Provincial Coordinator for every Province, according to the criteria set forth in the Regulations of the Congress

- one SDB or FMA Delegate for each Province. It is to be borne in mind that the number of voting Religious members cannot exceed one-third the total of those in the Assembly who have the right to vote.

§4. It is the responsibility of the Rector Major to decide on the theme, the meeting place, and the participants of the ordinary and extraordinary World Congresses, from the proposals of the World Council. Its organization is entrusted to the World Executive Secretary (the SEM).

The World Coordinator assumes responsibility for the concrete and technical coordination of the Congress.

from the Original Rule of 1876 by St. John Bosco

Article V, #3

5. Constitution and Governance of the Association

3. The Superior of the Salesian Congregation is also the Superior of the Association.

from the Charter of the Charismatic Identity of the Salesian Family

Art. 13. The Rector Major in the Salesian Family

Belonging to the apostolic Family of Don Bosco has its origin in communion and is nourished by communion. This consists in corresponding to the Spirit Who leads it towards unity, bringing into existence and giving practical and even official forms to it, so as to ensure an effective relationship and collaboration in activities.

Belonging to the Salesian Family therefore of necessity requires a vital centre which makes the reference to Don Bosco, to the common mission and to the same spirit a reality.

This centre, according to the mind of Don Bosco, is the Rector Major. In him all recognise a three-fold ministry of unity: Successor of Don Bosco, common Father, centre of unity for the entire Family. It falls within his official competence to admit to the Salesian Family the Groups which request it, according to the pre-established criteria.

Since this is his mission, he feels he has a duty to offer the necessary guidelines to ensure the fruitfulness of the charism in each Group of the Family. Through his example and teaching he constructs unity and ensures in the variety of the specific vocations, fidelity to the spirit and the coordination of certain initiatives. He exercises this ministry with the paternity which was Don Bosco's own: an approach that requires understanding and kindness, attention to the growth of each one, guidance in charismatic fidelity, commitment to the fruitfulness of the Salesian vocation in all its expressions, just as Don Bosco had written: «Your Rector will have care of you and of your eternal salvation».

from *A Prophecy's Journey*

The First Great Congresses (1895-1909)

The International Congresses have occupied an important place in the life of this vast organization. They answered the need for unity, which was so often underlined by Don Bosco and which held first place in the Cooperators' *Rule*. When speaking of the first Congresses held under Don Rua, Don Ceria hurried to respond to not-so-imaginary objections: "These great Congresses were not begun for the purpose of 'making publicity' for the Salesian Society but sought to spread Don Bosco's spirit in the world, in conformity with the plan for and by means of the Cooperators, who were to increase in number as much as possible."

These huge gatherings were organized according to a well-trying plan. Framed by solemn opening and closing ceremonies, the "serious" part of the Congress was dedicated to the study, under the form of talks or discussions, of some important topics: the nature of cooperation; personal formation; the young and education; vocations; social action; the Press; the Missions... It should be added that the presence of and/or talks given by some big-name religious and civic personalities; the presence and testimonies of foreign delegations; the reading of the names of numerous persons enrolled; and, above all, of the message from the Holy Father, contributed to create in the participants an atmosphere of fervor which ultimately found expression in vows or resolutions.

In the month of April of 1895, the first Cooperator Congress was held in Bologna. Called by the local archbishop, Cardinal Svampa, a great admirer of Don Bosco, this gathering, which took on international proportions, was organized by Don Trione, the Secretary-General of the Association. Around 2000 participated, among whom were a good 30 Prelates, Bishops, and Cardinals. Don Rua was present as the actual president. His ascetic leanness, his modesty, and his affability left an impression on the crowd. Imposing religious ceremonies, spiritual concerts, and talks were held. For three days, Don Bosco's work in the fields of education, social action, the Missions, and the printed press received every kind of praise. It was a success and one that had repercussions in many countries due to the presence of representatives from fifty-eight Italian and foreign newspapers. Five days after the close of the Congress, in a letter filled with enthusiasm, Don Rua reminded the Salesians of one of Don Bosco's predictions concerning the future of the Congregation: "Around 1895, a great triumph!"

In the wake of this first congress at Bologna, other great congresses were celebrated, before the war, on significant dates for the entire Salesian Family - like the one that took place in 1900 in Buenos Aires for the 25th anniversary of the opening of the first House in Latin America. Those who planned the Congress had two purposes in mind: to spread knowledge of Don Bosco's Work and to make Cooperators aware of all that their beneficence had been able to realize in twenty-five years. The office of president at the meeting was filled by the ex-Member of Parliament Santiago O'Farrell, while Don Albera, as Don Rua's representative, presided over the directive committee composed of the Provincials and those in charge of Works. Cooperators from Brazil, Chile, and Bolivia were also present. Attorney Emilio Lamarca, when speaking of Don Bosco, used the following expression: "The life of Don Bosco impresses us as being the Gospel put into practice and his work a page out of the *Acts of the Apostles*; his profile is in the *Letter to the Corinthians* because he was patient and kind." Following him, the Provincial Don Giuseppe Vespignani developed his topic of "The Two Secrets of Salesian Cooperation: Piety and Charity". The more demanding topics concerned: the education of working-class youth, the usefulness of agricultural and technical schools, the Missions, immigrants, and the Press.